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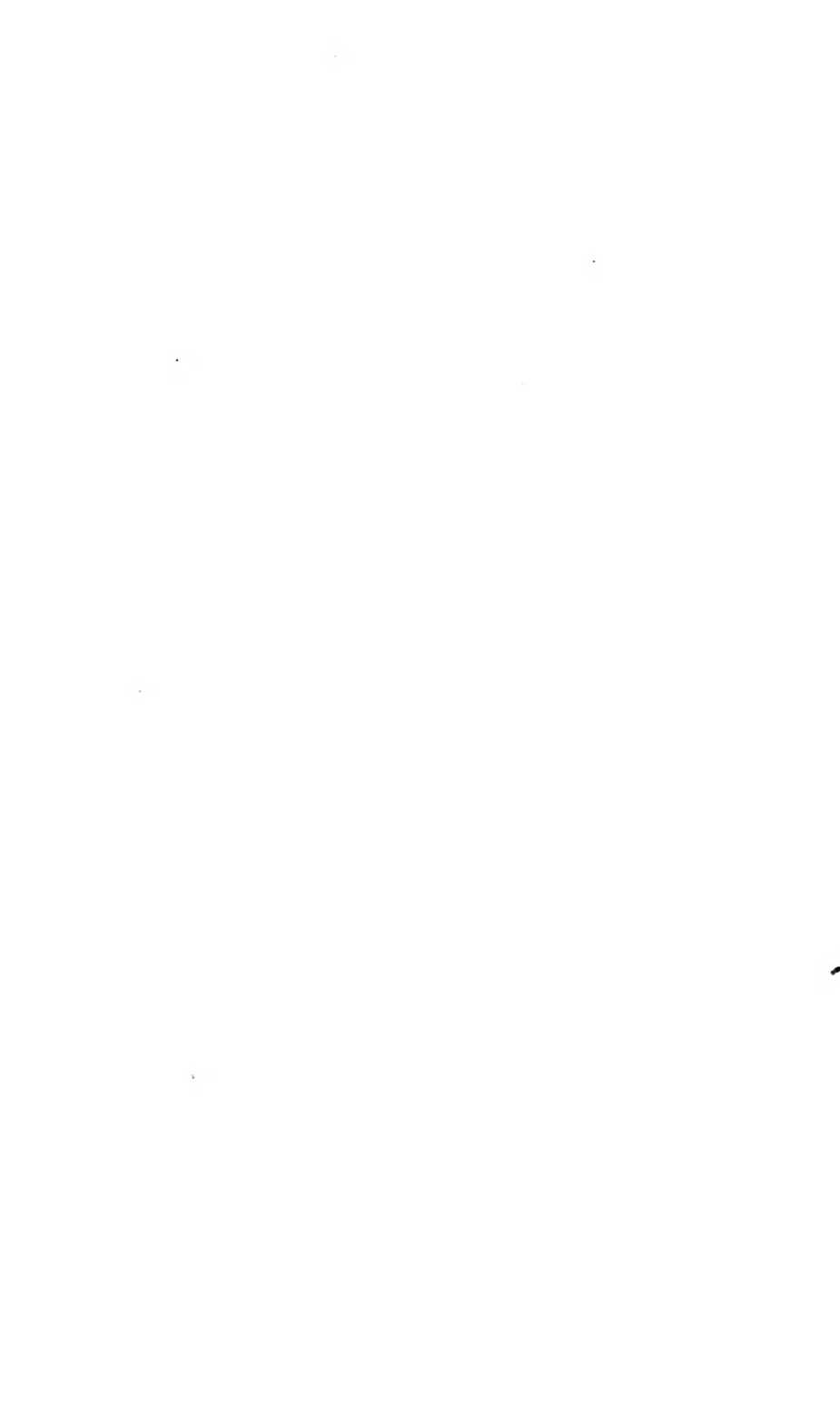
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## P R E F A C E .

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I think it right, before I give this work to the Public, to say a few words concerning its origin and the manner of its progress, and also on the subjects it contains.

Sitting one night in a meditating frame of mind a thought came across me “how the first men obtained a knowledge of God and Religion.” To this an answer seemed to be immediately ready; “they obtained it from Revelation, from a Revelation made to them by God himself;” for at this moment the Decalogue came to my recollection. But it occurred to me immediately that this answer was not satisfactory; for this

knowledge of God and of his Laws had been given to the *second race* of men, who were the descendants of Noah, whereas the question related solely to the *first*, namely, to Adam and his immediate descendants. I was obliged therefore to think again, but after a considerable pause I could not bring to my memory any words represented by Moses as having been spoken by God either to Adam, Eve, or Cain, from which they could have inferred any other knowledge of him, than that he was their creator, as well as the creator of the world in which they lived, and that they found themselves under an obligation to obey him. This being the case I determined to read the Pentateuch of Moses from the beginning to the end not only carefully but critically, not doubting but that I should be able to collect from thence a satisfactory solution of the question.

Having at length finished my task I found that there were texts in these books, the full meaning of which on former perusals of them I had overlooked, and that these texts, if taken



from the several chapters where they lay scattered, and put together would throw considerable light upon the subject. I found in fact, that God, besides having given to Adam and Eve that knowledge of himself as their creator, which has been just mentioned, had given them also *certain laws or precepts*, consisting chiefly of prohibitions, which should serve them as rules for their own moral guidance and for that of their posterity, so that *the great principles of morality or the distinction between right and wrong was made known to them soon after their creation*. I found also that certain *religious doctrines* had been entertained in the earliest times, which could have come from no other source, and that God had added to these gifts the gift of a portion of his Holy Spirit, by which men might be warned and guarded against moral evil, led into the way of moral good, and taught spiritually to understand both the *laws* and the *doctrines* now mentioned. These *laws* and *doctrines* obtained, both of them, in the antediluvian, and were afterwards introduced by Noah into the new or

patriarchal world. With respect to the former, namely, *the laws or precepts* another discovery was made, which was this, that as far as they went, they were the same in substance as the laws of the Decalogue ; from whence it was to be inferred, that the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai were not the *first Revelation* which he had given to man. This statement is certainly contrary to our generally received notions at the present day ; but, whatever our prejudices may be in this respect, we ought not to retain them if it can be fully proved, that most of these laws or precepts were in existence and acted upon as *divine laws* many hundred years before these commandments were given.

Being unwilling to go without farther light, if farther *scriptural* light could be obtained on this subject, I determined to look into the book of Job, as the only other book, which, on account of its great antiquity, could serve my purpose. But here an obstacle presented itself. It has been contended of late years by some, contrary

to the opinion of our ancient and almost all our modern divines, that Job lived after Moses and not before him, and that he had seen the writings of the latter, from which he had probably copied. I was obliged therefore to have this question settled in my own mind, before I could gather any new information, which would be satisfactory to me, from the book of Job. Upon this I went to work. I looked first into the controversies that had taken place upon this point, and after this I decided upon reading the book of Job, as I had done the Pentateuch, with all the attention I could give it, and see whether I could not collect from internal evidence, furnished from the book itself, sufficient materials for satisfying myself upon this point. In consequence of this investigation three new arguments rose up to my mind, more strong and decisive of the point in question than any which I had seen in these controversies, and all of them tending to show, that Job must have lived in the patriarchal ages long antecedent to the birth of Moses. This discovery, if I had not deceived myself by

any false reasoning, enabled me to confirm all the deductions, and more than all the deductions, which I had gathered from the Pentateuch relative to the *laws* and *doctrines* before mentioned, which were said to have been given by God to Adam; the first for the moral guidance of him and his posterity, and the latter for the exercise of their religious faith.

I was now convinced of three things, first, that the first men obtained their notions of God and religion from God himself; secondly, that there was a time when *all men living* possessed this knowledge, namely, when they lived on the plain of Shinar, where “they spoke one language and dwelt together as one people;” and therefore thirdly, that when the different families separated from each other at the time commonly called the dispersion, they carried with them this knowledge to the new lands into which they went. From these considerations a new question, and this a most important one suggested itself to my mind. It was this, what use did these families, thus dispersed, make of this knowledge

afterwards. Did they preserve it, or did they lose it? In what situation for instance were they found in this respect when our Saviour came into the world? This appeared to me to be a very formidable question, for I saw no other way of answering it than by trying to find out into what parts of the world these different families (which became afterwards so many nations) had migrated, and what their religion was when settled there. Formidable however as it appeared to be, I resolved to do my best to solve it. Suffice it then to say, that after a most tedious, difficult, and laborious inquiry for many months, I discovered that one of these families, namely, that of Cush, had abandoned the worship of the true God so early as at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century from the Deluge, and had begun to worship the Sun in his stead, and that others of them had done the same afterwards, the one after the other, at different intervals of time, *so that in the time of Moses there was not one of them (of which any records could be found) which had not gone into idolatry, except*

the Israelites in Egypt; and even of these, many had been infected by this moral disease; so that if it had not been for the providential call of Abraham the world would have been involved in universal darkness as relates to the knowledge of the true God. This was the melancholy result; such indeed as when I began this enquiry, I was not quite prepared to expect: but I was obliged to admit it, because it was founded upon evidence, which had been almost all of it taken from the word of God.

I had now answered my first question, and also to a certain extent the second, which had sprung out of the first. I had therefore done more than I had at first intended to do, and was about to conclude, when it struck me that I ought, on account of the melancholy result just mentioned, to carry my views a little farther. The call of Abraham under such circumstances and for such a purpose could not but claim attention; and a fair consideration of it, though a short one, would moreover make a suitable ending to the work. I determined therefore, upon

this new view of the subject, to read once more the history of Abraham, and also that of his descendants as it was connected with this event; to follow these into Egypt; to stop and examine their civil and religious condition there; to observe their proceedings in the wilderness and the promised land; to visit them afterwards during their captivity in Babylon; and to see in what manner they conducted themselves after their return to Jerusalem till the coming of Jesus Christ. This I did, and on a review of what I had thus done it appeared that several of those nations, which were found to be idolaters in the time of Moses, had become so, as early as in the days of Abraham, and that others were then going off in the same way, Abraham's own family not having escaped the infection, so that the prospect was, even in these early times, that the religious light, which all the families possessed when they lived together in Shinar, would *have become progressively extinct*. It pleased God therefore at this critical juncture, while a glimmering of the true light remained, to interpose to

prevent this appalling calamity, as well as to forward at the same time some of his other gracious designs to men. This he did by the call of Abraham, whose descendants in a legitimate line were to be his own *chosen* or *peculiar people*. With this view they were to be kept distinct and separate, by means of particular customs and ceremonies, from the rest of the world. God was also to take them under his own *especial care* for the object just mentioned, namely, the *preservation of his truths*, so that *there might be one nation* upon earth to know and perpetuate them. This appears to have been the first part of the divine plan on this occasion. The second appears to have been that at a future distant time, when this nation should have been reclaimed from idolatry, Jesus Christ, a legitimate descendant of Abraham, should appear among them, and should not only *restore the knowledge of God* to all the nations of the earth, *whose ancestors had lost it* through unbelief, but should *restore it with additional light*, and should be also the bearer of a gracious message of salvation



to all who should receive him. These are the contents of the first part of this little work.

With respect to the second part it was not thought of till long after the first had been written. It originated thus. Having finished the manuscript of the first part I laid it by for nearly a year. I then opened it that I might read it again, hoping that at this distance of time I might see it as it were with new eyes, and thus be enabled the better to judge of its contents. It seemed to me after a careful perusal of it that much was yet wanted to complete it, indeed I thought, if justice were to be done to the subject, it ought not to have been closed here. There were facts most intimately connected with it, which ought not to be passed over. Thus for instance the coming of Christ into the world, according to the second part of the divine plan just mentioned, was considered in Heaven itself as such a blessing to mankind, that God was pleased to give intimations of the event many ages before it took place, as well as of the time at which it was to take place, in order that there might be

a general expectation of some such personage when he came. Here then a wide field was opened for enlarging on the subject, such as of trying to find out what these expectations were; what particular nations entertained them; how these nations acquired them; and whether Jesus Christ, when he had finished his mission on earth, had fulfilled all the objects for which he had been sent, so that it might be said that he, and he alone, answered the character of the personage, who had been thus expected. I thought therefore that if something like a statement explanatory of the preceding particulars should be added in a second part, the little work would be rendered more complete. It would thus contain a history of God's interference with men for their spiritual welfare, and of its effects, in one unbroken chain, from the days of Adam to the time when christianity was established under Constantine as the religion of the state, and therefore that it might be acceptable as well as useful to many.

*Playford Hall, Suffolk, May 10th, 1836.*

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When God had made Man and Woman, it was necessary, absolutely necessary, that he should give them information on a variety of subjects for they could have known nothing of themselves. They could not have known how

they came into the world; nor why they were placed there; nor what they were designed to do; nor what they could do; nor what they ought to do; nor what they ought to avoid. It was absolutely necessary therefore, that God should give them instruction, to a certain extent; but we, who judge only by the limited faculties which we possess, know not how he could have done this, though in his infinite wisdom he might have used other means, unless he had first given them the power of articulation and then a language, that is, a power of understanding certain words or sounds as representing certain ideas. The learned and intelligent Ellis in his essay "On the Knowledge of Divine Truths" makes the following observations (p. 104) on this subject. "God made man an intelligent being, or endowed him with a capacity to receive and know truth; and therefore gave him also the faculty of speech or organs fit to frame articulate sounds, and furnished him with language to enable him both to receive and give instruction; that words, being the signs of internal conceptions or marks for ideas in the mind, he might be capable first of being taught by God and then to teach others or to convey the thoughts of his own mind to another.

“ I think it would not be difficult to prove and I shall in other parts of this work endeavour to do it, that the first language was taught by God ; or that man, could not of himself have discovered the knowledge of fixing sounds to signify objects, ideas or conceptions, so as to be signs of, and stand for, the reality of things, for the subject of internal operation in his own mind, or make others so exactly understand his thoughts, that the correspondence or least disagreement of these invisible representations of things should be immediately known, or, if this were possible, that it must have been the work of many ages, during which time man had been neither an intelligent nor sociable creature, and so sent into the world for no purpose ; for though he had the faculty of receiving knowledge and organs adapted to form articulate sounds, yet, without language, he could not have received it, he could not have thought, and his several noises had been sounds without signification. For he that could not think, could never substitute sounds for things, or affix sense and meaning to words any more than parrots can, though they frame articulate sounds ; because there is no natural connection between sounds and ideas, and consequently language the instrument of rationality

(since without it, our rational faculties had been useless,) must be ascribed not to Man but to God.”

God, then, having given to Adam and Eve, as we have supposed, a language, by which he made it easy to hold conversation with them, would, undoubtedly give them afterwards all the information that was necessary for their situation; and the first information he would give them would probably be, to tell them who he himself was, and who and what they themselves were, and their relative situation with respect to him and to each other. He would probably tell them, first, that he was God Almighty, who had existed from all eternity; that he had created the world and themselves, and all that they saw in it; and that they, themselves therefore being creatures, owed to him homage, reverence, and obedience.

This then, having been done directly after the gift of language, (for we can suppose nothing else than that this was done,) God, in order to try these his newly made creatures, commanded them not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree, and annexed a penalty to their disobedience. There was, at this time, when there was only one man and one woman in the world. apparently no

other way of trying their virtue than by some prohibition. God therefore gave to Adam and Eve by means of this prohibition an opportunity of proving, whether they retained that innocence or that image of God in their minds in which they had been created. It appears, that both of them transgressed the command just mentioned, and then it was that they first knew sin, or the difference between good and evil.

If Adam and Eve had been designed to live without issue, there would have been probably no occasion for any other prohibitory laws, because there are crimes which they could not possibly have committed. For example, any law against *Adultery* would have been unnecessary, because there was only one husband and one wife then living. Again, any law against *Theft* would have been useless, because all the things then in the world, were their own. But when they had begun to increase and multiply, and when, moreover, moral evil, as we have just seen, *had already entered into the world*, and when again *the nature* of the children of Adam *was different from the original nature* of their father and mother (the former being the offspring of parents who had sinned and the latter *having come pure out of the hands of God*)

it became necessary, that new light should be given and that laws should be introduced for the moral and religious guidance of mankind; and it was necessary that God should do this himself; first, because he was the Creator and Governor of the Universe, and the being therefore who was to be obeyed; and secondly, because no one knew what was God's own will but himself, nor what was fit to be done for such a purpose. We collect accordingly from the paraphrases of the most ancient Jewish writers on the Pentateuch, that God had frequent intercourse with Adam, that he revealed himself to him as the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe, and that he gave him a number of laws from his own mouth which pointed out to him and his posterity what, as moral agents and responsible creatures, they were bound to do, and what, as such, they were bound to avoid. These laws were communicated by Adam to his children, and being committed to memory by them and handed down by them and others in like manner, they were observed by the Faithful up to the time of the Flood. These laws may be said, therefore, to have contained the *preceptive* and *prohibitory part* of the body of divinity of the Church of Adam: and as they were observed



after the Flood, by Noah and his descendants, and were in force at the memorable dispersion of mankind which took place on the plain of Shinar, and for one or two centuries afterwards, they may be said to have constituted also the *preceptive* and *prohibitory part* of the body of divinity of the Church of Noah or of the patriarchal world. Hence they are handed down to us under two different names. Some of the ancient Jewish Commentators alluded to, call them *the statutes of Adam*, considering them to have been given by God to Adam; and others call them the *precepts of the Sons of Noah*, considering that Noah carried them over the waters of the flood, and that he delivered them to his children for their observance, and that these delivered them for the like purpose to the new world. Our Divines, when they speak of them generally give them the latter title; but they are not known in the Scriptures by either of these names. The learned Ellis, before quoted, notices them thus. "For as to the universal, equally common law of mankind p. 443, the Jews never were of any other opinion; but as often as they had occasion to mention it, their usual expression was "they were commanded *to the Sons of Noah*, that is, *the whole race of men, and the first man*,

*Adam, received them from God.* For they held, that certain natural laws were, immediately after the creation, declared and commanded to men, which, from divine authority became of perpetual obligation; whence the paraphrase of Onkelos on those portions of holy writ, where Enoch and Noah are said to have *walked with God*, expresses it, that they walked in the fear of the Lord; and thus they became righteous, *because they kept the precepts* which were appointed as early as our nature and propagated through all mankind: hence the fratricide of Cain, the abominations of Sodom, and several other facts mentioned in the books of Moses, were wicked and became unlawful *before the delivery of the written law.*”

Let us now see what these laws are reported to have been. I find that there are two versions of them. Our great and learned Selden gives them thus;

1. To abstain from Idolatry.
2. To bless the name of God, or, as some express it, to abstain from Blasphemy, or Malediction of the divine name.
3. To abstain from Murder.
4. To abstain from Adultery, or from the pollution of impure mixtures.

5. To abstain from Theft
6. To appoint Judges to be the guardians of these precepts, or to preserve public justice.

Dr. Echard, in his ecclesiastical history, differs a little, and but a little from the former in his account of them. According to him the duties enjoined were these.

1. To abstain from all Idolatry.
2. To worship the true God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.
3. To shed no man's blood.
4. To refrain from unlawful lusts and mixtures.
5. To shun all rapine, theft and robbery.
6. To administer true justice.

These, it appears, were the laws or moral precepts by which the first race of men were to be governed as to their conduct towards God and towards each other, and which, it is also said, came from the mouth of God himself. They are, as we see, whichever of the two accounts we take or even if we compound them, both few and simple; and the reader cannot fail to observe, that they constitute an half part of the Decalogue or ten commandments of Moses. Few however as they were, they were most impor-

tant as to the great ends for which they were designed. They taught men their relative situation to God as creatures. They made it their duty to worship him, and thus constantly to depend upon him. They guarded against the profanation of his worship by excluding all other gods. They protected his holy name from profanation also; and with respect to the conduct of men themselves in their intercourse one with another, they pointed out, and denounced as sinful, those actions which, if men were betrayed into them, would most disturb the order, peace, and well-being of Society.

That these, or that some such Laws as these were given by God to Adam for the moral guidance of men in the first ages of the world immediately or soon after the Creation, it is but reasonable and consistent with the divine attributes to suppose. Can any man imagine, that God would have set down upon our Earth two creatures, Man and Woman from whom *millions of responsible beings* were to spring, and not have informed them of their duties, or told them what as beings so constituted they were to do, and what they were not to do? Such knowledge was absolutely necessary for them in the infancy of society, and they could never have discovered it

altogether of themselves. But it is not necessary that we should appeal to our reason only on this occasion or to the commentaries of Jewish interpreters. Every person, who reads his Bible carefully, will find every thing which I have hitherto stated to have come from these Expositors mentioned there.

He will find there, in the first place, that God had oral intercourse with Adam and Eve, and that they must have known that he was God Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of the world, and that they were to worship him as Creatures. The perusal of a part of two chapters in Genesis will furnish him with this information.

He will find there, in the second place, that the men of the Antediluvian times were *governed by Laws*, to which they looked up as the *religious guides of their lives* and which they considered *to have come from God*. Now that God gave to Adam, soon after the Creation, laws for the moral and religious guidance of himself and his posterity, may be inferred from what he himself is reported to have said to Cain on a certain occasion. The occasion was this, "And it came to pass, in process of time, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and that Abel

brought also of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, an offering to the Lord ; and that the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering but that unto Cain and his offering he had not respect," Gen. c. iv. v. 3, 4, 5.

It will be important, before we proceed further, to learn why God made this difference in the respect shewn to the offerings of the two brothers. In answer to this, I shall not trouble the reader with the commentaries of the learned on the words above-cited, but state at once, as the result of their inquiries, that the offering of Abel was in *all respects conformable to the will of God*, as revealed to our first parents on the subject of offerings or sacrifice and that Cain's offering was not. Cain then, it is evident, if this interpretation be true, had acted contrary to the will, or transgressed a law of God. I may now go on to say that Cain, having seen how differently the two offerings had been received by God grew very angry ; upon which God said to him, " Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen ? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the door " Gen. c. iv. v. 6, 7. Now these are the words of God to Cain, upon which I mean to argue the case. And first, it

appears to me that God, when he used them, appealed to the conscience of Cain, whether he needed to have been in the situation he then was ; *whether in fact he did not know, that laws had been revealed to Adam, obedience to which would procure the favour of God, and the breaking of which would draw down his displeasure.* Surely the words “ shalt thou not be accepted ” are equivalent in this place to the words dost thou not know, or thou knowest, that thou shalt be accepted. These words indeed would have been unintelligible to Cain and wholly useless, if he had not had this knowledge before. We may conclude therefore that God had given laws to Adam for the government of the world upon moral principles, the great principles of right and wrong, before or after the birth of Cain, and that Cain knew it. We shall come to the same conclusion if we will be at the trouble of going into a more minute examination of a part of the words in question. And if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the door,” that is thou shalt become chargeable with sin. Hence it is clear, that if any man did not well in those days, whether Cain or any other person, he would be chargeable with Sin. But what was sin or what could sin have been

in these early times? We have no conception that it could have been any thing else than what Moses and all the scriptural writers have always defined it to be, a transgression of some one or more of the laws of God. But if this definition be true, *there must have been at that time laws of God to transgress, or Cain would not have been able to commit sin.* But the words in question will give us new light upon this subject, if we will examine them still further. “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted,” that is, *rewarded*; “and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door;” that is, thou shalt be *punished*; for so the learned Bishop Cumberland in his treatise ‘*de legibus Patriarcharum*’ translates the sentence “Sin lieth at the door,” p. 403, and very properly, because both the ideas of punishment and guilt are included in it. It appears then that these laws of God, or rather the observance and infraction of them, were to be accompanied by rewards and punishments either in this or a future life. And this was actually the case; for we find that the very first crime that was committed after God had thus spoken to Cain was punished by his own especial interference, and that after this men were frequently rewarded and punished in the same



way, according as they had done good or evil. Thus Cain himself was punished, as God had forewarned him he would be, by being made an outcast from society on account of the murder of his brother. Enoch after this was rewarded, because he had walked with God, that is, (according to the Targum of Oukelos, because he had kept the precepts, which God had given to Adam) by being translated to Heaven. Noah again was rewarded by God for the same reason by being saved in the ark with his whole family. The rest of the world were punished by being drowned, because they had broken every law that had come from God, "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts being only evil continually." All this took place before the flood. But Noah carried these same laws with him afterwards to the new world, and we find that they were accompanied there also by rewards and punishments. Lot was made to escape from Sodom by the especial interference of God, while the rest of the inhabitants of that city were destroyed.

He will find there again, by looking a little farther into the book of Genesis, that there were laws in the patriarchal times, some hundred years before the decalogue appeared, in the knowledge

of which, Men were to bring up their households, in order that they might know their duty to God and man, and that these also were acknowledged and acted upon *as the Laws of God*. In Genesis Chap. 18. v. 19 there is an allusion to a code of laws as existing in Abraham's time for such a purpose, "for I know him," (Abraham) says God, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." The first question which arises here is what was the way of the Lord just spoken of? The text says "to do justice and judgment." But the words, "to do justice and judgment," have so large a meaning, and imply so many duties, that no one law could be so worded as to comprehend them all. The "*way of the Lord*" then must have included *many laws*, that is, *a code of laws* then existing for the moral government of mankind, consisting both of precepts and prohibitions. The words also used in the verse just quoted imply *that they came from God*; for it is expressly said that they were *the way of the Lord*. But when did God give out the laws now under our consideration? Not in Abraham's time; for it

is no where even hinted at that they were new. Nor at any time between Abraham's time and the flood; for we hear during that interval of no addition to the antediluvian laws, but only of a change of penalty in one of them, namely, in the law of murder, by which it was ordained, that from that time, "who so sheddeth Man's blood, by Man shall his blood be shed." They must have been then those same laws which God alluded to when he spoke to Cain as lately explained; those great laws of morality, which followed the creation of man, and the observance of which would procure the favour of God, and the breaking of them his displeasure.

He will find there again (if he will read the eighteenth chapter of Exodus) in the answer which Moses gave to a certain question proposed to him by Jethro, a confirmation of what has been said on this subject, so far as this, that a code of Laws existed for instructing the people in the knowledge of God, and also in the knowledge of right and wrong as related to the conduct of the one towards the other before the Decalogue appeared, and that this Code came from God. It appears that Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, when he heard in Midian of the stupendous miracle, which God had performed

in bringing the Israelites safely through the red sea and in destroying Pharaoh and all his host there, found his way to Moses then encamped in the wilderness, in order to enquire after his health, and to congratulate him personally on that marvellous event. During his stay there, "it came pass that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, what is this thing that thou doest to the people? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, because the people come unto me *to inquire of God*. When they have a matter they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, *and do make them know the statutes of God and his laws*." Exod. Chap. 18. v. 13—17. This was the answer which Moses gave to Jethro, I have but one question to ask upon it. I ask then what were "*the statutes and laws of God*," out of which Moses was then instructing the people. One thing which we know concerning them (and we need not desire to know more) is this, that they *could not have been* the Decalogue or ten commandments of Moses, for Moses *had not then received these from Mount Sinai*. It was not till some time after this occurrence that

God gave them to him and his people. But if they were not the laws of the Decalogue, what were they? It would appear that they could only have been the patriarchal laws before mentioned, and to which God alluded, when he said, "for I know him (Abraham) that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment" Gen. Chap. 18. v. 19. They could only have been those laws, which came from God to Adam, and from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and from Shem through the line of Arphaxad to Abraham, and from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob, and from Jacob to his children, and from his children to their children, *the Israelites in Egypt*. Here, no doubt, they would be used as Rules for instructing and judging the people for eighty years, that is, while their relation Joseph, was the Prime minister of Pharaoh. They would be forbidden however by his successors, to be used for nearly the next century and half, while the people were slaves.\* But

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\* Our authorized version makes the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt 430 years, whereas they were only 215 years there. The Samaritan version sets this matter right by reckoning the 430 years from the call of Abraham to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.

when the people escaped from the land of bondage, and stood in need of instruction more than ever in their duty towards God and each other, and this immediately, Moses would certainly revive them for this purpose, for he must have known them from his father and mother, who were Hebrews, and that he did know them is clear from this, that, when he drew up the civil and ceremonial parts of his code, he incorporated several of them in it. Thus, for example, the Mosaic laws of inheritance were originally patriarchal. Again, if a man died and left a widow without children, his brother according to a law of Moses was to marry his widow. This also had been one of the patriarchal laws. Again, the distinction between clean and unclean Beasts made by Moses was a patriarchal distinction. Again, Moses took his burnt offerings either from the herds or flocks or turtle doves and young pigeons. The Patriarchs did the same. He sprinkled also on two occasions the blood of the sacrifice with a bough of Hyssop. This was also the patriarchal mode of sprinkling it. I will just add, that he revived also among his people, when he left Egypt, the use of the Cubit and the Shekel, which had been patriarchal weights and measures. I conclude therefore that when the

Israelites were delivered from Bondage. they came again under the patriarchal government; and that Moses was instructing the people when Jethro came to him, as Abraham had done before, out of those statutes and laws of God which had been given by God to Adam.

And he will find lastly, if he looks into the book of Job, what some of the patriarchal laws were which constituted the code now mentioned, that is, he will find that the six or seven laws lately quoted from the ancient Jewish Expositors were in force in the days of that patriarch. Take as a proof of this the following extracts from that book. And first, with respect to the precept for the worship of God. “Then Job rose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.” Job. Chap. 1. v. 20. Again, Job is charged by Eliphaz on another occasion with disregarding this precept in the following words, “yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.” Chap. 15. v. 4. Farther on he reminds Job of the duty and advantage of attending to it. “Thou shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee.” Chap. 22. v. 26—27. So far for oral worship. With respect to the worship

of God by sacrifice as a duty in those days. the fifth verse of the first chapter will establish this without going further. "And it was so when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all." We come next to the sabbath day. Divines have been much divided in opinion as to the meaning of the first verse of the second chapter, "again there was a day when the sons of God (or servants of God, as Coverdale translates it, or devout persons in Job's own house,) came to present themselves before the Lord." Some say, that this day was the sabbath; others that it was the great day of expiation; but however this may be, certain it is, that God had, centuries before this time, commanded the seventh day to be set apart for holy purposes; and there can be no doubt that Adam and his descendants worshipped God on that day; and no precept was so likely to be practically attended to as the one which commanded the day to be kept holy on which God had rested from the great work of Creation. Idolatry is our next subject, and here the account is most satisfactory. "If I beheld the Sun," said Job, "when it shined, or the



moon walking in brightness, and my heart had been secretly enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied the God that is above." Chap. 31. v. 26, 27, 28. For Blasphemy he have only to appeal to the latter part of a verse before quoted, "For Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Chap. 1. v. 5. The cursing of God then was a sin, if we read the whole verse, to be expiated by burnt offerings. But what does the 'cursing of God' mean here? Divines have interpreted the words differently; but I believe the meaning to be, that the sons of Job might have spoken irreverently of God during the merriment of their feasting. With respect to Adultery, Theft, and Murder, Job in the thirty-first chapter appeals to his accusers as to the correctness of his former life, whether, among other things he had injured his fellow-creatures by the commission of any of these crimes. "If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. For this is a heinous crime. It is an iniquity to be punished by the Judges." v. 9, 10, 11. Again, "if my

land cry against me, or that the furrows thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money; and have caused the owners thereof to lose their life; let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." v. 38, 39, 40. I may add to this, that Job speaks in the twenty-fourth chapter of the man who removes his neighbour's land mark, and takes away his flocks, and the murderer and adulterer as rebelling against the light, that is, the moral light which God had given him in those days. So far for the moral precepts or laws just mentioned as having been in existence as rules for the moral guidance of men in the time of Job; and that Job considered these to have come originally from God, we may infer by an appeal to the following remarkable verses. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined, neither have I gone back from the *commandment of his lips*, I have esteemed *the words of his mouth* more than my necessary food." Chap. 23, v. 11, 12. Here then there is a direct allusion to the laws in question; and how does Job characterize them? He describes them as having been *the commandment of God's own lips* and the *words of his own mouth*. And when did Job consider them as having been thus revealed

to men? He could not have alluded here to the Decalogue or ten commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, for these were not given there till probably some centuries after his own death. Nor could he have alluded here to certain precepts or laws, which God had revealed privately to himself in particular or to himself alone; for in this case neither Eliphaz, nor Elihu, nor Bildad, nor Zophar would have understood him. He could only have alluded to them as laws known to those, to whom he was then speaking, and known also as having come down to them from Noah, and to Noah from the Antediluvians, and to the Antediluvians from Adam, and to Adam from God. And I am glad to find that the learned Ellis before quoted is of the same opinion. “No other interpretation, says he, can be given of these remarkable words. They were not delivered by any immediate Revelation, and therefore must refer to a former declaration of God’s will to our first parents, which was of perpetual and unalterable obligation to the sons of men.” p. 303. Dr. Hales also, one of our most learned and laborious commentators makes nearly the same observations on the same two verses. “It is evident,” says he, “from this passage and others, (See Mant’s Bible on Job Chap. 23. v.

11, 12.) that there was some collection of precepts or rules of morality and religion in use among the Patriarchs. Such were the precepts of the sons of Noah; and there is great reason to believe, *that the substance at least of the Decalogue given on Mount Sinai was of primitive Institution.*"

I should have thought these observations sufficient on this part of the subject, but that I have taken for granted a circumstance, which, if not true, will at once annihilate the argument which I have been so long endeavouring to raise up; for some have supposed, that the book of Job was written by Moses, and others at any rate that Job lived in the time or not till after the time of Moses. Now, in the first case, any attempt to prove that the laws or precepts now specified were divine rules for the moral guidance of men in the first or patriarchal ages *because they are to be found in the book of Job*, would come to nothing if Moses had been the author of that book; and, in the second case, the attempt would be equally vain: for if Job did not live till in or after the time of Moses, it would be contended, that Job had borrowed these laws from the Decalogue given by God to Moses, and therefore that it could not be true

that they had existed in these early times and that they had been originally given by God to Adam. In fact the book of Job can only be confirmatory of what we have said on this subject on the supposition, that this venerable patriarch lived before the delivery of the law. We must therefore, before we proceed further, examine what ground those authors stand upon, who support either the one or the other of these opinions.

In the first place they, who suppose that Moses was the author of the book of Job deduce their suppositions principally from the very striking resemblance, which they find in certain thoughts and expressions in the book said to have been written by Job to certain thoughts and expressions which they find in the pentateuch of Moses. But to this argument we may say at once, without quoting the passages which have been compared the one with the other, that, though such a striking correspondence or agreement may afford a reasonable conjecture, it can never be admitted as a decisive proof of the fact.

They again, who assert that Job must have lived either in or after the time of Moses, build their assertions on the fact, that he mentions

certain Institutions and laws as existing in his own time, which were actually among the Institutions and laws of Moses, and that he could not therefore have known of these, unless he had lived after Moses, and had either seen or become acquainted with his works. But I believe that there is as little solid foundation for this as for the other argument. Let us examine one of the cases. It is said that Job c. 31. v. 11 and 28., speaks of certain crimes as iniquities “to be punished by *the Judges.*” But we never hear, it is said of the Institution of Judges in the scriptures till the Israelites had left Egypt and just before the delivery of the Law. It was an Institution of Moses for the more convenient settlement of disputes among the people as related to himself. How then, it is said could Job have mentioned it, if it was not known till three or four centuries after his own death? I answer that though Moses introduced such an Institution among the Israelites, it does not follow that there were not Judges among the different patriarchal tribes or families for the same purpose; for how, without persons of this description could peace and order have been preserved in the world. Every one conversant with the history of the old Testament knows, that the heads

of Families in those days were both Kings, and Priests, and Magistrates, and Judges, and that they had the power of punishing with Death.

Let us now go to another case ; and here I ask at once, how can it be justly inferred, that Job must have lived after the time of Moses, merely because some of the laws of the Decalogue are found to be the same as some of those mentioned by Job, when the book of Genesis tells us, that the laws so mentioned by the patriarch were in use several centuries before he, Moses himself, was born. Take the following as proofs of this last fact. The first commandment in the Decalogue runs thus. “ I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have none other gods but me.” Now no man can read the Genesis of Moses and not believe, that Adam and Eve had frequent intercourse with God, *and that they knew that they had a Lord, their God*, and that they were to worship him and him only ; and that they communicated this knowledge to their children and their childrens’ children. Nor can any man read the same book and not believe, that Noah had frequent conversation with God relative to the building of the ark and the salvation of his family ; and that when he landed from the ark, *he built an altar to the Lord the same Lord as the Lord of*

*Adam and Eve, and his God also* and that he had the same notions concerning the worship of God as they had ; and that he conveyed these notions to his children and his children's children also. Hence *the first commandment in the Decalogue* would have been the first *fundamental article of faith in the churches of Adam and Noah*, and this almost as early as the creation of the world itself.

Again, the fourth commandment in the Decalogue given at Mount Sinai says, "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy." But Moses tells us, Gen. c. 2. v. 2, 3, that God had sanctified that day, that is, that he had set it apart for holy purposes, and this as early as almost immediately after the creation of Adam and Eve ; and there can be no doubt that Adam, Abel, Enoch, and such as were reputed righteous in the Antediluvian times, and that Noah after the flood and his descendants for some ages honoured it accordingly. He tells us also, Exod. c. 16. v. 23, that the sabbath was kept in the wilderness as an institution of God before he, Moses, had arrived at Mount Sinai.

The sixth commandment in the same Decalogue says, "Thou shalt do no Murder." That murder was a crime in the earliest times is clear



from Moses' account of the first murderer. He tells us, that God set a mark upon Cain, by which he was to be known and held in abhorrence wherever he went. What this mark was we do not know. We know however that God, almost immediately after the flood, annexed the heaviest possible punishment to the commission of murder in these words "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Genesis, c. 9 v. 6. This was the law for the new world in case of murder: but it was only a renewal by a fixed penalty of what had been the will of God with respect to this crime *in the time of our first parents*.

The seventh commandment in the Decalogue says, "thou shall not commit Adultery;" but we gather from Moses himself, that this commandment was in force in the time of Abraham and Isaac. As one proof of this see Genesis Chap. 26. v. 9. 10. 11. "And Abimelech called Isaac and said, behold for a surety she is thy wife, and how saidst thou she is my sister? and Isaac said unto him, because I said, *lest I die for her*. And Abimelech said, what is this that thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, *and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us*. And Abimelech

charged all his people, saying he that toucheth this man or his wife shall *surely be put to death.*" See also the case of Abraham, Sarah, and Pharaoh as related in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, and also Genesis Chap. 38. v. 24., where Judah as the head, and therefore lawgiver and judge over his own family or tribe, pronounced sentence of death upon Tamar. We know not at what time this law was introduced among the patriarchs, but Abimelech was so ready to have acted upon it, that we may presume that it must have been known many, many years before, and if so, then it must have existed *some centuries before the delivery of the law to Moses.*

The eighth commandment in the Decalogue runs thus "thou shall not steal." But we may conclude from the answer of Jacob, when he was accused of having stolen the images of Laban (which answer Moses himself has recorded) that theft was a punishable offence in those days, that is, *more than three hundred years before Moses himself was born.* The words of Jacob were these. "With whomsoever thou findest thy goods, *let him not live.*" Genesis. Chap. 31. v. 32. The learned Dr. Adam Clarke in his note upon this verse says, "It appears from this that anciently theft was punished with death, and we

know that the Patriarchs had the power of life and death in their hands."

I have now shown, that several laws in the Decalogue were acknowledged and acted upon as laws of God for the moral guidance of men in the patriarchal times, many hundred years before the Decalogue itself appeared, and therefore that the argument, which states that Job must have lived after Moses or he could never have mentioned these laws in his book, is wholly false. But I have not done with the subject yet. It is of importance to try to ascertain, were it only as an historical fact, which of these two lived prior to the other. I feel it also to be a very interesting question to myself. I shall therefore continue my inquiries on this point. But before I do this I wish to dispel a notion, which I know has obtained with some, namely, that the dialogue between Job and his friends is fictitious, or only a dramatic composition. A few words only will, I hope, suffice for this. Ezekiel speaks of the rightcousness, and St. James of the patience of Job. (Ezek. Chap. 14. v. 14. and James Chap. 5. v. 11. Now would two men, the one a prophet, the other an inspired Apostle, have spoken thus of a fictitious character?

In looking over the book of Job we shall find,

as far as *events* or *persons* are recorded, but little to aid us in our inquiry. The transgression of Adam and his attempt to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden are mentioned there. Job. Chap. 31. v. 33. There is also a manifest allusion there to the voice of Abel's blood crying from the ground. Chap. 16. v. 18. The Creation of the world is also noticed there, Chap. 38. v. 4—9., and so is the Deluge Chap. 12. v. 15. It is certainly pleasant to see that traditions on these subjects, which had passed from Father to Son in the days of Job, agree so well with the accounts which Moses has given of them, but they do not promote our present purpose. We learn also from the same book, that the land of Uz was the country to which the Patriarch belonged, and that the names of his friends were Bildad, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Elihu; and that the first of these was a Shuhite, and the second a Temanite, and the third a Naamathite; but notwithstanding all this knowledge we are still in the dark as to the age in which he himself lived. There is however one verse in the book only, or two at most, which, as far as events are concerned, can afford us any light on our way, and this only on the supposition that the verse or verses alluded to *have been rightly interpreted*.

As both of them are of the same kind and to the same effect, the quotation of one of them will suffice. Bildad in speaking of the ruinous end, to which the wicked man shall come, says, "It (desolation) shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his; *brimstone* shall be scattered upon his habitation," Chap. 18. v. 15. that is, say some of the interpreters of this passage, brimstone shall be scattered upon the habitation of the wicked man, so that, *like Sodom and Gomorrah*, it may be an everlasting monument of God's displeasure. Now the question is, did Bildad, when he made use of the word brimstone, allude to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, *seeing that these cities are not mentioned by him*. If he did, then it is clear that Job did not live till the time or after the time of Abraham and Lot, during whose lives this signal act of the divine vengeance took place. But there are no records in Job, by which, supposing the interpretation of the preceding verse to be right, we can determine how long he lived after the two Patriarchs now mentioned. There is one inference however, which I think we may safely draw from the silence of this book on certain subjects, which is, *that Job never could have lived after Moses*; for if he had lived either in the time or

after the time of Moses, he must have heard of the miracles of God in Egypt, but particularly of that mighty one, which he wrought when he drowned Pharaoh and all his host in the red sea ; for it must not be forgotten, that in a few weeks after the Israelites had effected their passage there, they encamped at Kadesh very near to the borders of Edom, afterwards called Idumea, *in which country Job is supposed to have lived*, and from which place (Kadesh) Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom to apprize him of their miraculous escape from Egypt, and to solicit a passage through his land. Num. Chap. 20. v. 14. But, if Job or his friends had been acquainted with these miracles, I think we should have seen something very striking said concerning them in the dialogue which passed between them ; for not only were there many opportunities of introducing them there when speaking of the infinite power of God, as in chapters 9. 12. &c., but there was a disposition also in the interlocutors themselves to appeal to whatever was grand and sublime in nature or marvellous in the ways of God, to enforce their reasonings. I cannot account therefore for the \*omission of these

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\* Some learned men have thought, that one of these miracles, that of dividing the Red Sea, is most clearly alluded to by Job in Chap. 26. v. 12. "He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he

miracles in the book of Job as well as of some other events, but upon the supposition either that Job and his friends knew nothing of them, or that these were all dead, before they had taken place, that is, before the time in which Moses is acknowledged to have lived.

But we collect from the dialogue itself *that Job must have lived some centuries before Moses*. It is a fact established by history, as far as there are any records on the subject, that in the time of Moses every tribe or nation then upon the earth, except the Israelites, had gone off into Idolatry. It is not however to be understood by this, that there might not have been here and there an in-

smiteth through the proud." Their reason for thinking so was that *Rahab*, the Hebrew word for *proud*, was an epithet for Egypt. Indeed Isaiah uses *Rahab* for Egypt. Chap. 51. v. 9. But the same word *Rahab* or *proud* was also an epithet for the sea in allusion to its proud lofty waves in a storm. In this last point of view the verse would run thus. He divideth the sea with his power (making mountains and vallies in it) and by his understanding he subdueth or smiteth through the proud waves thereof, and bringeth them back to a calm. This is thought to be the most consistent interpretation of the verse. The idea, which Job gives us here of the power of God is the same as that which David gives us of it Psal. 107. v. 25. 26. 28. 29. "For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof, They are carried up to Heaven; and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of their trouble. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress; for he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still."

dividual,\* who still retained the knowledge of the true God, though the nation to which he belonged had, as a nation, adopted a new worship. Moses himself was acquainted personally only with three nations, the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the Midianites. Now all these were Idolators at this time; the Egyptians, see Ezekiel Chap. 20. v. 7. 8., the Canaanites, see Moses every where; and the Midianites, see Numbers, Chap. 12. v. 1., where Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, because he had married the daughter of Jethro, a Midianite, that is, *a Cushite or idolatrous* woman. See also Numbers Chap. 31. v. 13—16 where the Midianites were ordered to be cut off, being Idolators or worshippers of Baal-Peor. But besides these we know, that the Babylonians and Chaldeans had gone into Idolatry, as will be shown by and by, almost as early as the days of Nimrod, and that the Ethiopians (of Abyssinia) were in the same state, and that the children of Aram or the Syrians had begun to go off afterwards in the time of Jacob, see Genesis, Chap. 35. v. 2. where Jacob purges his household, which consisted chiefly of Syrians, of the images or strange Gods

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\* Such perhaps as Jethro and some others.



before he went to Bethel. To these may be added according to Bishop Cumberland the children of the sons of Japhet. Now, bearing in mind that this was the state of things in the time of Moses, I may ask what were the characters of the five persons, who took a part in this dialogue? Job, the first of them, *was a believer in God*, and accustomed to worship him in the appointed way, by prayer and sacrifice. He taught his children also to walk in his own steps. He is described in the beginning of his book, Job, Chap. 1. v. 1., to have been “a perfect and an upright man, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.” Under the unparalleled trials of his faith he continued unshaken in his fidelity to God, and not a murmur escaped from his lips. He said, “the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” We learn also from the dialogue, that all the other four were persons of nearly the same description. They were all *believers in God*. They acknowledged him as the Creator, preserver, and moral governor of the world, and as a God of infinite power, wisdom, and holiness, and they obeyed and worshipped him as such. Now I may ask, whether *in the Idolatrous state of the world, as just set forth*, there could have been found five

such persons as these, all believers in God in the land of Uz in the time of Moses, seeing that the five were not persons selected from all the inhabitants of the land for their religion, but that they were suddenly and accidentally brought together by reason of the illness of Job, and that they were brought together from within a compass of country, where the parties were only at a visiting distance from each other, or perhaps near neighbours. I think it would have been impossible. But this is not all. It appears again from the dialogue, that as these five men were all of them worshippers of the true God, so the inhabitants of the country in which they lived continued to worship him also; for it is stated by Job in the presence of all of them, and not denied, that *Idolatry there*, was an offence *then punishable by the Laws*.\* Job. Chap. 31. v. 28. Now this consideration induces me to ask another question, and one of even greater importance than the other, as being more decisive of the point which I have in view, which is, was there a nation or people in the time of Moses, except his own people, where the LAWS *took*

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\* And yet this country went afterwards into Idolatry; see 2 Chron. Chap. 25. v. 20., "that he might deliver them into the hands of their enemies because they sought after the Gods of Edom."

*cognizance of IDOLATRY as SIN?* Not one to my knowledge. But if these things be so, then it is clear that Job and his friends must *have lived in a purer age*, than that in which Moses lived, as far as the knowledge of the true God and the practice of Idolatry were concerned; and if so, then in an age *prior to that of Moses*, and, taking other circumstances into the account prior by some centuries. Indeed, if I were asked to say when I supposed the Patriarch to have lived, I should say (for I reject the interpretation of the verse before quoted, Job. Chap. 18. v. 15., where Bildad, when he used the word Brimstone, is thought by some to have alluded to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) that Job lived before the time of Abraham rather than that he lived after it.

But the dialogue furnishes us with another argument, which leads us to the same conclusion, namely, that the age, in which Job lived, must have been prior to that of Moses. For we discover, in perusing it further, *what sort of Idolatry* it was which prevailed in the time of Job, not in Job's own land, the land of Uz, for Idolatry was punishable there, as we have just seen, but in the countries round about, Job says, "If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the moon

walking in brightness ; and my heart hath been secretly enticed ; and my mouth hath kissed my hand ; this also was an iniquity to be punished by the judges ; for I should have denied the God that is above.” Job. Chap. 31. v. 26. 27. 28. It is clear from this, that the species of Idolatry practiced in Job’s time by certain families, tribes, or people known to him and his countrymen was the *worship of the heavenly bodies*. But what was the sort of worship usually practised in the time of Moses by those nations, with which he, the Legislator, was surrounded? It consisted in paying adoration to *Idols or graven Images*. These were either images of the Gods Baal-Peor and Ashteroth or those of Calves. Indeed, we hear nothing from him in his travels through the wilderness but of *Altars, Images, and Groves* as connected with the worship of the country through which he passed. Indeed the second commandment delivered by him to the people from Mount Sinai shews what was the heathen worship of those times. “Thou shalt not make to thyself *any graven image ; nor the likeness* of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.” But though this was the prevailing Idolatry of the day in those countries with which Moses was acquainted,

Moses did not fail to caution the Israelites against the worship of the Sun or Moon also, and to threaten those, who were guilty of it, with Death. Deut. Chap. 4. v. 15—20, also Chap. 17. v. 2—6. Now with these materials in our hands, or bearing in mind that these two different sorts of worship prevailed in the two different countries in which Job and Moses might be said to have lived, we shall find no difficulty in laying the foundation of an argument, which will bring us to the same conclusion as in the other case. And first, it is a point agreed upon by all historians and divines, that when men first left the true God through unbelief, and went off into Idolatry, the worship, which they first substituted for that which they had left, was that of the Host of Heaven; but that the worship of Idols, or Images, or Likenesses of things, did not obtain till some ages afterwards; and this account carries with it its own conviction; because nothing like a reason of any sort can be given, why men, who had once the knowledge of the true God, should have gone off all at once into such a gross worship as that of Beasts, Fowls, Fishes, and Creeping things, whereas it is not difficult to imagine, why they should have adopted the worship of the heavenly bodies, when they must have daily seen

and felt their powerful and benign influence upon the earth, and this for the benefit of themselves. The learned Calmet observes upon the verses of Job which have been just quoted, “that they point out the worship of the Sun and Moon, which was much used in Job’s time, *and very anciently used* in every part of the East; and in all probability *that from which Idolatry took its rise.*” Dr. Adam Clarke speaks thus on the same passage. . “In this verse,” says he, “Job clears himself of that Idolatrous worship, which was *the most ancient* and most consistent with reason of any species of Idolatry, namely Sabœism, the worship of the heavenly bodies; particularly the Sun and Moon; Jupiter and Venus; the two latter being the Morning and Evening Stars, and the most resplendent of all the heavenly bodies, the Sun and Moon excepted.” The learned and laborious Dr. Hales, as quoted in D’Oyley and Mant’s Bible, makes the following short observation upon the same. “The only species of Idolatry,” says he, “noticed in this book is Zabianism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, which is *the earliest on record*, and an *additional proof of the high antiquity of the composition.*” The learned Bishop Cumberland, having occasion to speak of the worship of

the Sun and Moon calls it *the most ancient Idolatry* (de Ligibus Patriarch: p. 439.) But it is unnecessary to multiply testimonies: history speaks but one language on this point. But if it be the fact that constellation-worship was long prior to that of Idols or graven Images, it is but reasonable to presume, that Job must have lived a long time before Moses. Had Job lived either in or after the time of Moses, he never could have said, when wishing to clear himself of Idolatry, "If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in brightness," but he would have spoken in something like the following manner, If I beheld Baal-Peor, or looked to Ashteroth or any other Idol and my heart had been secretly enticed, and my mouth had kissed my hand, then I should have been worthy of punishment for I should have denied the God that is above.

But the truth of the proposition, that constellation-worship had its origin before that of Images, when men first departed from the true God, may be made to appear from facts. Moses, though he never entered into the promised land, yet fell in occasionally with Amalekites, Moabites, Midianites and others, but we hear from him no other account, as I have observed before, than that they sacrificed *to Idols*, the work of men's

hands ; but Joshua, who succeeded Moses, entered into the territories of the Canaanites and became intimately acquainted with their customs, and he also, when speaking on the subject, gives us a similar account. We gather however accidentally from Joshua by his mere mention of the name of a town, which he allotted to the tribe of Issachar, that it is probable that the worship of graven Images, which then prevailed among the Canaanites, *was not the worship which their ancestors had adopted when first or originally they forsook Jehovah.* The name of this town was Bethshemesh, which signifies the house or Temple of the Sun, or the temple which had been dedicated to the Sun. But history as well sacred as profane informs us, that there were many Bethshemeshs in Canaan. We may therefore fairly conclude that, though the Canaanites both in the time of Joshua and Moses were the worshippers of the Idols Baal-Peor and Ashteroth, their ancestors had been the worshippers of the Sun in a former age. And this is the conclusion, which Dr. Adam Clarke also adopts in his note upon the word Bethshemesh as mentioned by Joshua c. 19 v. 22. “There were several cities or towns, says he, of this name in Palestine, an ample proof that the worship of this celestial luminary (the



Sun) had generally prevailed in that Idolatrous country." Hence one or two ages might have passed since the Canaanites quitted constellation for idol-worship ; and one or two more since their ancestors first quitted the true God for the worship of the heavenly bodies, and thus adding these ages together we may be carried back to the time described by Job, when Idolatry in his own country was punishable by the Laws. But the case of the Canaanites was not a solitary one. There were Bethshemeshs in Syria also. Jacob Bryant in his *Mythology*, v. 1. p. 80, tells us that "*Ancient* Syria was particularly devoted to the worship of the Sun and of the Heavens. Philo Biblius, says he, informs us," that the Syrians and Canaanites lifted up their hands to Baal-Samen, the Lord of Heaven, under which title they honoured the Sun ;" but we know that the Syrians in the time of Jacob had adopted the worship of Idols. There were also anciently Bethshemeshs in Egypt, or temples for the worship of the Sun there, but in the time of Moses this worship had been changed into the worship of bulls or calves, or as Jeremiah says of Images. " He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, which is in the land of Egypt ; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with

fire." Jer. c. 43. v. 13. It will be seen also further on, that the Babylonians began their Idolatry by the worship of the Sun; but Isaiah informs us that in his time their Gods consisted of graven images. Now if it be true that in the time of Moses the worship of the people which he himself knew was that of Idols; but that in Job's time the worship of the people in his own vicinity was that of the Sun, Moon, and Stars; and if the latter was the first upon record, preceding the former by some ages; and if moreover Job's own countrymen had not even gone into the constellation-worship because they had not yet departed from the worship of the true God, we have another reason to induce us to suppose, that the age, in which Job lived, must have been considerably prior to that of Moses; and this assertion is strengthened, if not established by Job's own declaration, that Idolatry was punishable by law in his own time in the land of Uz; for if this declaration be true, *Job could not have lived after Moses*; for Job was not an Israelite; and there was no nation from Moses to Christ, except the Israelitish, which had such a law; the rest of the world having been Idolaters during that long period.

But there is yet one other argument, which

ought to be brought forward before we close the case. It is said of Job (c. 42. v. 16) "that he lived after this (his severe trial) one hundred and forty years." Now it appears from Genesis, c. 11. v. 12—26 that the young men in the patriarchal times from Shem to Terah, the father of Abraham, began to marry or to have their first children born to them at about thirty-two years of age. Let us now suppose this to have been the case with Job. But it appears again Job c. 1. v. 4, that his sons at the time when his afflictions came upon him, were old enough to have households of their own. Let us suppose then that his eldest son might have been at this particular time about thirty years old. Job under these premises would have been in his sixty-second year when his afflictions began. But he is said to have lived one hundred and forty years after this. He must have lived then to the age of two hundred and two. But this was about the age (from 200 to 240) to which men generally lived from the time of Peleg, in whose time the life of man began to be shortened to the time of Jacob. Thus Peleg lived 209 years, Reu 207, Sepg 200, Nahor 119, and Terah 205 after the birth of their first children. Abraham also, the son of Terah, was 175 years old, and Isaac.

the son of Abraham, was 180 when he died. After this the term of human life was shortened again. Jacob the son of Isaac reached only the age of 147, and Joseph the son of Jacob the age of 110: and this last term, namely, 110, was about the ordinary length of an old man's life in the time of Moses. Thus Moses himself was 120, and his successor Joshua 110, when they died. Now taking it for granted that these statements are true, it will not be difficult to determine among which of the three classes of men, which have been mentioned, Job must have lived. He could not have lived among the men either in or after Moses's time, if he died at the age of 202. Neither if he was an old man, when he died, could he have lived among the class of men from Shem to Peleg, the length of whose lives was from 400 to 500 years and upwards. There is then but one class left wherein to place him, namely, that which begins with Peleg and ends with Isaac the son of Abraham, which consisted of men, who lived a little better than two hundred years after their first children were born to them: and this is the class, in which, to meet the most objections, I think Job ought to be placed.

I am sorry that the digression, which I have

been obliged to make, in order to prove that Job lived in an age prior to that of Moses has been so long ; for after all that has been written I have only yet shewn what were the *preceptive and prohibitory parts* of the body of divinity of the churches of Adam and Noah. But what were the *doctrinal parts* of them ? Men must have had what we may call *their religious opinions or notions* or rather articles of belief during these ages. It will therefore be my next business to try to discover what these articles of belief were.

One of the religious opinions, which we may consider to have been entertained in these times, was that of the agency of the holy spirit of God, I mean in its ordinary uses ; that is, as convincing men of sin, warning them against it, encouraging them to good, comforting them in the pursuit of the same, and guiding them in their religious concerns. This opinion must have prevailed in the earliest ages ; for we find God saying to Noah before he destroyed the world, “ My spirit shall not always strive with man.” Gen. c. 6. v. 3. Doubtless Noah understood the meaning of these words or God would not have used them ; but he could not have comprehended the meaning of them, unless the agency of

God's holy spirit on the minds of men for good had been a doctrine previously received and previously understood. And that men considered themselves to be influenced by the same divine spirit after the flood we learn from the book of Job. Elihu there, in apologizing as a young man for reasoning with Job, says in substance, that it was not the number of days a man had lived which gives him wisdom, but the spirit of God which breathes upon the spirit which is in man. His words are these, "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." Job, c. 32. v. 8. These words Elihu addresses to the persons present, as containing a familiar truth or as a doctrine which was known to them all. Hence it appears that though the men in Job's time had the benefit of the moral precepts said to have been given by God to Adam, yet they were not left without the agency of the spirit of God upon their minds as a monitor, a reprover, a comforter, an interpreter, and a guide. Indeed how could Adam and his posterity have advanced in spiritual life, after sin had entered into the world, if God had not reserved for them a portion of his holy spirit to enable them spiritually to understand their duties, and to perform them.

Another of these religious notions was the agency of some invisible being who was known to the men of these times under the name of Satan. Satan was supposed to be constantly employed in various ways in endeavouring to lead men astray from their duty. Adam, we are told, was tempted by him and fell: and most deplorable was the change, which is represented to have been made in his condition in consequence of this fall. But if so, then the doctrine of the agency of Satan must have been as old as the temptation itself, and must have spread from that time; for Adam would undoubtedly take the first opportunity to inform his children, that is, as soon as they were able to understand him, who and what the seducer was, and *to caution them* against his artifices; and as succeeding families were equally interested in communicating the same warning to their children, this doctrine must have been well known to the Antediluvian world. But we may go further and say, that Noah being in like manner interested in cautioning his own children against the seducer, would have carried this doctrine with him to the new world; and it is evident that he did so, for we find that it had come down through the patriarchal ages to the time of Job, in confirmation of which I need only appeal to

the sixth and seventh verses of the first chapter of his book. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also, (invisibly) among them. And the Lord said unto Satan whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it.” What a lively description is this of the seducer! It represents him as always on the watch, as being here and there and every where in search of his prey; not even forgetting the Sanctuary, if perchance he might find any hypocrite there. Such a picture could not have been drawn, had it not been a faithful representation of one of the religious notions of those times.

Another notion or article of belief was the fall of man; but as the arguments, which have been just used to prove the doctrine of the agency of Satan in the first temptation, will equally prove this, I shall content myself with observing, that Job alludes to the fall of Adam as a matter well known and believed in his time. “If,” says he, “I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquities in my bosom.” Job, Chap. 31. v. 33. Now what could Job have alluded to when he used the word transgressions and coupled it



with the name of Adam and of concealment at the same time, but the sin of our first parents, when they endeavoured to conceal it by hiding themselves among the trees of the garden of Eden?

Another religious notion or matter of belief was the depravity of human nature after the fall. Moses informs us, that the cause of the destruction of the old world was “that God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth,” and “that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” We are not at liberty to doubt, that this was the state of man in the age to which Moses alludes; and we know that Job gives nearly a similar account of the state of man in his own time. Two quotations from him will be sufficient to shew this. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one.” Again, “What is man, that he should be clean, and he that is born of a Woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his Saints, yea, the Heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” Thus then it was considered in Job’s time to be as natural to man to sin as when he was thirsty to drink water.

Another religious notion was that of the immortality of the soul and of future rewards and punishments. I fear however in consequence of the very scanty space allowed by Moses in his history of the world from the Creation to the Deluge, that I shall not be able to establish these doctrines satisfactorily for Antediluvian times. We may infer however, if such doctrines, were found in the succeeding ages, that they had been brought by Noah together with those others, which we have just seen, from the old to the new world. That such doctrines prevailed in the patriarchal times we cannot doubt. To shew this I may observe first, that “to die” is usually represented in the Pentateuch by the words “to give up the ghost, or” the spirit, or as it may be translated, the breath. But Moses, when speaking of the dying of Rachel, avoids this usual phrase, and makes use of another so remarkable, that it is impossible to avoid noticing it. “And it came to pass, as *her soul* (not her breath) was departing (for she died) that she called his name Benoni.” Genesis. 35. 18. The learned Dr. Adam Clarke, who has bestowed great attention upon this passage, and who has given us the benefit of his extensive learning in the Hebrew Language upon it observes thus of Rachel’s death,

it is said “ *Be-tseath Naphshah* ” that is, *in the going away of her soul* ; but her body did not go away ; therefore her soul and body must have been distinct : If her *Breath* only had been intended *Neshem* or *Ruach* would have rather been used, as the first means *Breath*, the latter *Breath* or *Spirit* indifferently.” By this explanation we are led to understand, that the word, which is translated *Soul* in this passage, does not mean *Breath*, but the *immortal part of our nature*, and, if this be so, we cannot but believe that the notion in these times was, that the soul was immaterial ; that it was distinct and separate from the body ; and that when a man died his body was left upon earth, and that his soul went to another place. There is reason also to suppose that the same notion was entertained by Job in his time relative to the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and its entire distinctness from the body, for in Chap. 10. v. 1., Job says of himself, “ *my soul is weary of my life.*” Here is a proof, that the Hebrew word *Nephesh* here translated soul, and the same as that which was translated soul in the case of Rachel, does not signify the animal life but the soul or immortal mind, as distinguished from the Hebrew *Chai* used in this verse to denote that animal life. It is also very

remarkable, that Job uses the same two Hebrew words *Nephesh* and *Chai* in another part of the Dialogue in the same sense as before, that is, as opposed to each other, the one to signify the mortal and the other the immortal part of the Creature Man. “In whose hand, says Job, Chap. 12. v. 10. is the *Soul* of every living thing and the *Breath* of all mankind.” Does not the first part of this verse, says Dr. Adam Clarke, refer to the immortal soul, the principle of all intellectual life, and the latter part of it to the *Breath*, the grand means, *respiration*, by which Animal Existence is continued.

But we must leave Job for a moment and go back to the Pentateuch to examine a phrase there before we can complete our knowledge of this subject. It is frequently said of the Patriarchs when they died, that “they were gathered to their people.” No phrase so plain as this at the first sight was ever so much mistaken, or so much misunderstood. Readers generally imagine, that the persons thus spoken of were either buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, or committed to the earth in the same burial-place with their ancestors and tribe; but this is not the proper meaning of the phrase as I shall attempt to show. It is said for instance of Abraham,

that he gave up the ghost and was "gathered to his people." Gen. c. 25. v. 8; but this was not literally true, for Abraham was buried in his own cave of Machpelah at a distance from his father, relatives, and former connexions, and where the body of his wife Sarah alone had been deposited. Again, the same phrase is used by God himself to Moses and Aaron on Mount Hor, saying, "Aaron shall be gathered to his people." "And Moses did as the Lord commanded; and they went up into Mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son, and Aaron died there on the top of the Mount, and Moses and Eleazar came down from the Mount." Numbers. c. 20. v. 24—27—28. From this account it appears that Aaron was not buried with his family or people; for his body was left by Moses and Eleazar upon Mount Hor. Again, the same phrase is used by God to Moses. "Thou also shalt be gathered to thy people as Aaron thy brother was gathered." Numbers. Chap 27. v. 13. "And Moses went out from the plains of Moab unto the mountains of Nebo to the top of Pisgah. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him

in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-Peor; but no man knows his sepulchre, unto this day." Deuter. c. 34. v. 5. 6. Here then is a third instance of a holy man who is said to have been "gathered to his people," but yet who was buried in a strange land, away from all his kindred and friends. But if, when the righteous died, it is not true that the phrase "being gathered to their people" means that they were buried in the same sepulchre or burial-ground with their fore-fathers, relatives, and persons among whom they had formerly lived, what is the meaning of it? I believe that the notion in these times was, that the souls of the righteous (for to these only the phrase was applied) were to be gathered together in another world to dwell there, if I may so speak, with the souls of *their own people*, that is, of other *servants of God like themselves*, such as of Abel, Enoch and Noah, or of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the three latter of whom our Saviour, in answer to a question concerning the Resurrection of the dead (Mark. c. 12. v. 27.) speaks of as *then living*, though they had been dead some hundred years before. And this interpretation seems to me to be confirmed by the consideration that "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was one of the

phrases in our Saviours time, which had, no doubt, then come down by tradition, to denote the happy state of the righteous dead in another world; for many, says our Saviour, Matt. c. 8. v. 11., shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven.

It has appeared then, if my interpretation of these texts be right, that a notion existed among the Patriarchs, that there was a soul in Man distinct from the body, and that the souls\* of holy or good men, when their bodies perished on earth, lived in another state, and that they were rewarded there, and that their reward consisted, as the phrase "setting down" implies, in feasting with, or enjoying the conversation or company of the spirits of all the other good and holy men and servants of God who had gone before them. A notion was also equally prevalent in those

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\* It is evident from St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews c. 11. v. 14—20., that the patriarchs in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's time, expected to live again in a better country, viz., a heavenly one; but whence did they get this expectation? The Apostle says, from faith. But faith always supposes something previously done or said, to which it is to be attached. They must therefore have derived this expectation from revelation handed down to them by tradition from the earliest times. It is probable therefore that when God gave the precepts to Adam before mentioned, he gave him other information, such as of a future state and future rewards and punishments. See what was said in the case of Cain.

times that evil doers would be punished in another life. See that very beautiful chapter the twenty-first of Job, where (to shorten it) the Patriarch may be represented as speaking in substance thus. "Wicked men often live long and prosper in their families and concerns. At other times their prosperity is suddenly blasted, and their families come to ruin. God however deals with all according to his wisdom. Some are weak and others strong in their constitutions. Some are cheerful and happy, while others are melancholy and miserable; but they shall all lie down in the dust. Men of wisdom and experience will tell us if we ask their opinion, that God's dispensations are unequal in this life, but though the wicked may often prosper in this world they will assuredly be punished in another. Job's own words at the conclusion are these. "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." c. 21. v. 30. The notion in fact was, that God would give to every man the just recompence of his actions, as he had been found to have done good or evil, and to this effect Elihu speaks in the dialogue "for the work of a man shall God render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways." Job. c. 34. v. 11.



Another doctrine, which prevailed in the patriarchal ages, was that sin must be expiated or atoned for by sacrifice, or that when men supposed that they had offended God, they were to endeavour to appease his wrath by the blood of animals to be shed and offered to him with solemnities suited to the occasion. This doctrine may be illustrated by the practice of Job. "And it was so when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all ; for Job said it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." Job, c. 1. 5. We learn from this that Job, fearing that his children when they feasted together, might have let slip, in the hours of their merriment, some irreverent expressions concerning God, thought it to be his duty to offer burnt offerings to God in their behalf : and this he did continually, that is, as often as they sinned, or as often as he feared that they had sinned ; every new sin requiring a new expiation.

But upon what ground or authority was it that Job sacrificed as above described ? I answer upon the ground of tradition : the usage

of the day, and the common belief, that the practice had been commanded by God, and that it had been in operation ever since the time of the first sacrifice by Cain and Abel to the days in which he, the Patriarch, lived. But this answer leads to another question, by whose authority did Cain and Abel institute this rite? Did they invent it themselves? Certainly not. But why? Because the doctrine of appeasing God by the blood of animal victims could never have been the spontaneous product of the human mind. It never could have entered into the mind of Adam, or of Abel or of Cain, that the taking away of the life of one of the animals of their flocks and offering it to God could appease his wrath, when offended on account of sin. Now there were probably no more than these three (full-grown) men in the world, though there might have been many children, at the time when the Rite was introduced. But if these could not have possibly invented it, who did? The answer is plain. We have only to recollect that God had occasionally conversation with Adam and others (for so Moses tells us) and the conclusion will be inevitable, that this rite could only have come from God by revelation; and that it did so come is clear from some of the

words of God to Cain which we know of, as before quoted\* by which it appears that he (Cain) had not observed the instructions which God had given him on this subject; and this is the light in which it was viewed, I mean as of divine institution throughout the patriarchal times.

Men had also undoubtedly a notion in those times that some one of the descendants of Eve was to come at a future day in the character of a Redeemer from the power of Satan and the guilt of sin. The prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head must have given indescribable pleasure to Adam and Eve after their fall; and to their children afterwards, and therefore the utmost care would be taken by them all to preserve the memory of it. Noah also and his children would be equally interested in the preservation of it, so that it would be sure to be handed down to the new world. I cannot doubt that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were acquainted with it. And this was certainly the case with Job and his friends, or perhaps I should rather have said that Job and his friends knew that God had found a ransom for the sins of men upon their repentance. In confirmation of this I may

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\* Genesis. c. 4 v. 6, 7.

appeal to the thirty-third chapter of Job. In this chapter Elihu describes to Job the various methods, which God in his mercy takes to bring sinners to himself; and *when* by these means he has occasioned a sinner to repent, *then* says he (that is on repentance) "God is gracious to him (the sinner) and saith deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom (an atonement) for him." v. 24. Here is a just picture of Redemption in a few words according to Christian notions. But how much more perfect is this picture made by the two following verses, (25, 26) which give the following description of the redeemed. "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's. He shall return to the days of his youth." Does not this show that he shall be born again and become a new creature? "He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness." Does not this show again, that he, the redeemed, shall have the spirit of prayer, and that he shall feel himself reconciled to God, so that this shall fill him with joy? God moreover will enable him to bring forth the fruits of the spirit, and reward him for the work as if it had been his own righteousness. But this is sufficient for my purpose;

for I know not where, taking any three verses in the scriptures standing together, we shall find such a complete description of redemption and its effects as in the three which have been just cited.

Let me now make a few observations, such as a review of some of the preceding parts of this work may warrant. There is reason to believe from what has been said, that God gave to Adam and Eve after their creation certain precepts for the moral guidance of themselves and their posterity, and that certain doctrines or religious notions may also be distinctly traced from the earliest times, which precepts and doctrines combined constituted the body of divinity of the church of Adam, and that the same precepts and doctrines constituted afterwards the body of divinity of the church of Noah. Hence they must have been in operation as such in the plain of Shinar when Noah and all his descendants were living there, speaking one language and dwelling together as one people; for it is impossible to suppose that such a distinguished servant of God as Noah, one who had been miraculously saved from destruction in the ark, one who immediately on landing from it built an altar to the Lord, and one who is called in the scriptures *a preacher of righteousness*, would have neglected

to keep up among the different families, all of which had sprung from his own loins, that knowledge of God and religion which he had brought with him from the old world. Hence I conclude that all the families, when thus living together in Shinar, knew what their duty was both to God and man as far as it had then been revealed. Hence I conclude again that when the different families just alluded to separated from each other, and wandered about and formed separate communities in new lands, they carried with them in their wanderings (the head of each family on the tablet of his memory) all the religious precepts and doctrines which they then possessed; and hence it is easy to see how men in the succeeding patriarchal ages, such as Job and others, acquired that religious information which we have seen in the preceding pages, fragments\* of which would be found afterwards in different parts of the world.

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\* Mr. Douglas in a work on "Errors regarding Religion" has the following observation "Traces of primeval Revelation, and of the worship of the true God, are found dispersed in scattered fragments over the habitable earth. Even tribes so rude as to be enumerated among the instances of men who had no religion are yet discovered, from subsequent information to retain vestiges, however faint, of the primitive condition of man." To this observation I may add that the customs or rites discovered amongst the different tribes or nations inhabiting the earth, such as offerings or sacrifices to appease the wrath of an invisible Being or Beings, may be particularly noticed.

Nor have we any reason to suppose, that this religious information, or that any traditions of importance, would have suffered materially in point of truth by being passed from one generation to another, when we consider that in consequence of the longevity of man in those days three persons only would have been needed to hand down any striking occurrence from the Creation to the time of Abraham. Methuselah for instance lived at the same time both with Adam and Noah. He could therefore have told Noah whatever he might have received, or heard as having come from Adam, or whatever he himself had known of the history of the antediluvian world; and certainly no man could have done this better than Methuselah; for we cannot but believe that such a man as Enoch, his father, would have taken great care to acquaint his son with all that had passed relative to religion, laws, and doctrines, from the beginning. Noah then, having been thus instructed would have had numberless opportunities of communicating what he had thus heard and also what he had himself seen to his sons. Now Shem is said to have lived 500 years after the Deluge, or so far into patriarchal times as to have been contemporary with Abraham. Indeed Shem is sup-

posed by many to have been Melchizedek, the venerable King of Salem, and Priest of the most high God, who blessed Abraham after the battle in which he rescued Lot, and to whom Abraham gave a tenth of all his spoil on that occasion.

Having now endeavoured to trace the nature and extent of the religious knowledge which men had acquired at the time of the dispersion of mankind, my next object will be to see what use their descendants had made of it, that is, how far they had preserved or lost it, when, after having been thus dispersed, they began to people different parts of the earth; Shem (I speak generally) to people the continent of Asia, Ham, the continent of Africa, and Japhet, Europe. I mean what use they were found to have severally made of this knowledge when our Saviour came into the world.

I shall begin, because it suits my purpose better, with the family of Ham. The Bible informs us that Ham had four sons, Cush, Canaan, Mizraim, and Phut. The sons of Cush, of whom I shall speak first, did not migrate immediately on the dispersion, like many other of the families, but kept, if I may so say, their family-seat, that is, a tract of country near Babel on the plain of Shinar. Here they continued for some time till



Nimrod, the successor of his father Cush, and a man of great ambition, is said to have entertained views of aggrandizement, if not to have aimed at universal dominion. He accordingly, in process of time, possessed himself by force of certain parts of Babylonia and Chaldea, where he established the first known kingdom in the world. It is said of this family, that they were *the first* to abuse the religious light, namely, the moral precepts and doctrines before-mentioned, which Noah had left them, and to have departed from the true God. Indeed the word Nimrod signifies rebellavit or the man who rebelled ; but whether this name was given him because he had broken the precepts of the churches of Adam and Noah by committing outrage and murder in his expeditions for aggrandizement, or because he had broken the same precepts by going into Idolatry, I do not know. Certain however it is, that at this very early period, the infancy of the new world, he set up a *new worship*.\* “The Cuseans, says the learned Bryant, (Mythology vol. 4. p. 194) were the first apostates from the truth. They introduced *the worship of the Sun*, that great fountain of light, and paid the like

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\* Bishop Cumberland places the beginning of Idolatry at about the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century from the Deluge.

reverence to the Stars and all the host of Heaven. They looked upon them as fountains, from whence were derived to men the most salutary emanations. This worship was styled the *fountain-worship*." In process of time, these Cushites or Cuseans, who occupied, as we have just said, certain parts of Babylonia and Chaldea, became so populous, that they pushed out colonies, which went in search of new lands. The first body of these Emigrants, of whom we have any account, seated themselves on the borders of the Arabian Gulph, of which they became the first inhabitants. This fact is well attested by history, and indeed is proved by the circumstance, that Arabia Petræa which is situated there, is always called in the scriptures "Cush." Other bodies of Cuseans, whether from Arabia or the mother country, took possession of the ancient Thebais; and it is remarkable that the Bedouin Arabs, according to Volney, call those who live there Beni-kous or the children of Cush at the present day. Others of the same nation went as far as the sources of the Nile and settled in Abyssinia; and this part of ancient history is confirmed by Bruce (vol. 1. p. 376) who informs us, that there was a tradition among the Abyssinians, equally received by Jews and Christians, that they came originally

from the family of Cush. Here they established a powerful kingdom, and indeed went so far into the torrid zone, that in Jeremiah's time the whole race had become black, as appears from the well-known question of that prophet "can the Ethiopian (or as it should have been translated *Child of Cush*) change his skin or the Leopard his spots?" It was from these Abyssinian Cuseans that many of the negro nations now peopling the vast continent of Africa derived their origin. I may observe of all the different bodies of Colonists now mentioned, that they carried with them into the new countries, where they settled, the *constellation-worship*, which Nimrod had introduced among the parent stock.

The descendants of Canaan, whose case I shall consider next, occupied the land, which went by their fathers name, and which was also known by the name of the land of promise. These people *abandoned the religion of their fathers* also. It is not known at what time they fell into unbelief; but we have reason to suppose not quite so early as the descendants of Cush. Like these however they substituted the worship of the Sun and of the other heavenly bodies for that of the true God. This I shewed a few pages back to have been the case, or rather to have been deducible

from the number of towns in the first or ancient Canaan, which were called Bethshemesh, or temples dedicated to the Sun. At a later period however, when we become better acquainted with the descendants of Canaan, we find them occupied in the worship of *Graven Images*. This we collect from Moses, who, as he drew near to their borders, cautioned the Israelites against their Idolatry in the following words, “thou shalt make no covenant with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give to his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other Gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down *their images*, and cut down their groves, and *burn their Graven Images* with fire.” Deut. c. 7. v. 2. 3. 4. 5. But they had gone much farther than this in the time of Moses, as we find from a farther account by him concerning them. “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they (the descendants of Canaan) done unto their Gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the

fire to their Gods." Deut. c. 12. v. 31. This then was the use, which these people also had made of the light, which they must have had concerning their duty to God at the time of their dispersion.

With respect to the descendants of Mizraim, another of the sons of Ham before mentioned, we may say that these in their wanderings from the plain of Shinar came at length to a tract of country where they settled, and that this tract is handed down to us by the Seventy as the land of Egypt. Of these Mizraim I may observe at once, that they appear to me to have left the true God, and to have set up a new worship, much in the same way and probably much about the same time as the descendants of Canaan; for as in the land of Canaan we have seen that there were cities of the name of Bethshemesh, so we find (Jeremiah, c. 43 v. 13) that the Mizraim or people of Egypt had their Bethshemeshs also, of which probably there were as many there as in Canaan. Hence we may presume that their Idolatry began with the worship of the sun. We find however that in the time of Moses it had degenerated into that of Graven Images; for so Ezekiel informs us in the following words, "In the day that I lifted up my hand unto them (the

Israelites) to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands : then said I unto them cast ye away every man the abomination of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the *Idols of Egypt* : I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me : they did *not* every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, *neither did they forsake the Idols of Egypt* : then I said I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.” Ezekiel, c. 20. v 6. 7. 8. These Mizraim appear afterwards to have fallen into the grossest Idolatry ; for not satisfied with worshipping Idols, in process of time they paid their adoration, as Herodotus tells us, to various living creatures, such as beasts, birds, and fish of different sorts, and among these, to Crocodiles, Serpents, Frogs, Flies, and Beetles.

Very little is said of Phut, the remaining son of Ham. It is supposed however, that part of the family settled in the cities of the plain, such as Sodom and others, but that a remnant of it settled in that part of Africa which the Romans knew by the name of Mauritania. The ancient names of places seem to shew, that the family

had been there, for there was a whole country and a river also in Mauritania, both of which anciently bore the name of Phut. The other part of Africa called Lybia is said to have been peopled by Lehabim, a grandson of Cush, so that almost all this continent must have been occupied by the descendants of Ham. There can be no doubt that Phut and Lehabim, if they were sent from Chaldea and Babylonia to colonize, which was most probably the case, would carry with them the worship of the Sun and Moon and heavenly bodies (as it had been practised in these countries) wherever they went. And now having gone through the case of all the sons of Ham, I am reminded to ask what was the religious state of the descendants of all these when our Saviour came into the world, namely, of those who were in Babylonia and Chaldea, of those who were settled on the borders of the Arabian gulph, of those who occupied the Thebais and Abyssinia, and of those who inhabited Mauritania and Lybia. There is but one answer to be given, which is this, that, though their ancestors had been all of them acquainted with the doctrines and moral precepts of the Churches of Adam and Noah, while living in the plain of Shinar, they themselves were all sunk in Idolatry and barbarism.

I proceed next to the case of the sons of Japhet; and here I am to see what use these also had made of the religious light which they had received from their father, when, having left the plain of Shinar, they settled in Europe; for all historians agree that this continent was mostly peopled by them. We can collect, however, but very little information either from sacred or profane history relative to any movements or transactions on their part, or any customs or opinions among them of a date so ancient, as that must be, which followed soon after the dispersion of mankind. It is not however necessary for my purpose, that I should go into their very early or earliest history; for if in after times we should find countries peopled by them, in which all the inhabitants worshipped Idols, we should be as sure that these had departed from the religious principles of Japhet, or from the knowledge of the true God, as if the historian himself had told us when, where, and how such a change had taken place. Such then was the case both with the Greeks and Romans, the undoubted descendants of Japhet, and also with the colonies established by these in different parts of the world. Let us go first to Ephesus, the Greek colony of Ionia, and see whether the inhabitants there had



retained the precepts and doctrines which God had originally given to Adam, or had declined in their religious notions, at the time when St. Paul was among them. Did not the town-clerk of that city cry aloud in the hearing of the apostle, “ye men of Ephesus what man is there, that knoweth not, how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?” Acts, c. 19. v. 35. Let us go next to Athens for the same purpose; and was it not here, that St. Paul’s “spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to Idolatry?” Acts, c. 17. v. 16. Could any man walk at that time in the streets of Athens, and not fall in at every corner of them with some one altar or another, and these dedicated to different Deities? and did not St. Paul find among them one “to the unknown God?” Again, should we have found at Rome religion in a purer form than at Ephesus or Athens? Should we not have seen there the college of Augurs and a little further on in the streets temple after temple wherein to practise Idolatry, and in every house an image kept to be worshipped as an household-god?

It appears then from the above account, though very short, that the descendants of Japhet had

abandoned in our Saviour's time, equally with the descendants of Ham, those precepts and doctrines of the Churches of Adam and Noah, which had been the religious light and guide of their fathers. And here it is degrading to observe, that, if we go back from this time to the history of either Greece or Rome, we shall come to a period, when many of the Idolaters in these countries were men of the finest genius and of the most highly cultivated minds ; men capable of the deepest and most intricate research, and whose talents, though they may have been equalled, have never been surpassed by any even the most acute and enlightened of modern times, and that all these, notwithstanding their superior intellect and attainments, lived like their contemporaries of the common herd in the trammels of a vile superstition and without God in the world. It may be proper to observe in this place, that, whatever was the religious state of Rome or Athens as now described, the same was the state of the inhabitants of every city in Europe, that is, of every city inhabited by the children of Japhet, at the same time.

I am now to go back to the family of Shem, and to make the same enquiries there as in the other two cases. Shem had five sons, Aram,

Ashur, Elam, Lud, and Arphaxad. All these settled in Asia where they were born. My account of them will be very short. Of Aram we have already said, that his children settled in Cœlo-Syria, and that their descendants were early found to be worshippers of the Sun and afterwards of Graven Images in the time of Jacob. Ashur, it is well known, built Nineveh, and there laid the foundation, on which the great Assyrian Empire was afterwards erected. His descendants also became Idolaters. When this great change in their religion took place is not known ; but it must have been very early. The proof however that the Assyrians had left the true God for Idols is not to be collected from any scriptural writer till the time of Hezekiah, between seven and eight hundred years before Christ, when it is accidentally recorded that Sennacherib, their king, was killed by two of his own sons *as he was worshipping in the house of his God Nisroch*, a sufficient proof that the worship of idols must have been long before this the National Worship of the descendants of Ashur. 2 Kings, c. 19, v. 37. Elam settled with his family on the South frontier of the Medes, and to the North of Susiana, and at no great distance from the borders of Assyria. The capital of his country was known

some ages afterwards to the Greeks by the name of Elymais. It is no where positively said of his descendants, as far as my knowledge goes, that they were idolaters, but they are classed by the prophets among those idolatrous nations which were destined by God to punish the Israelites for their idolatry *and afterwards to be destroyed themselves*, Isaiah, c. 11. v. 11., Ezekiel, c. 32. v. 24. We know however that they were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and that they were in Daniel's time one of the one hundred and twenty seven provinces which constituted the Babylonian Empire. Daniel, c. 8. v. 2. This obliges us to conclude, that they must have been at any rate idolaters after this epoch; because idolatry was the religion of their conquerors, as we learn from Isaiah, who foretelling the fall of Babylon speaks thus, "And behold, here cometh a chariot of men with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all *the graven images of her gods* he hath broken unto the ground." Isaiah c. 21. v. 9.

Concerning Lud we know little or nothing. It is generally supposed that he settled almost in the midst of his idolatrous brothers, that is, if we take a map of Asia into our hand and look to the North, that he settled so as to have had Aram on his left hand, and Elam and Ashur on

on his right. There cannot be a doubt that the Ludim also forsook the religion of their fathers ; for considering their local situation as we have just described it to have been, and moreover that the Babylonians were to the South-West, and the Chaldeans to the South of them (two of the earliest and most obstinate of the idolatrous nations) we cannot conceive how they could possibly have escaped the contagion of such examples. It may be therefore laid down as a truth, that the descendants of all the four sons of Shem now mentioned had, like the descendants of Ham and Japhet, left the true God, and that they were all found in a similar state of idolatry with these when our Saviour came into the world.

The only case which remains for consideration is that of Arphaxad, the eldest son of Shem ; and here we are to enquire how far his descendants also preserved or lost the religious light, which he had received from his father. I may begin then by observing, that Arphaxad dwelt originally in Mesopotamia, but that his successors, as their families increased, moved on for the purpose of obtaining fresh land, so that in time they came to the Euphrates, and settled at length, in the country known to the ancients by the name of Chaldea, a part of which

had been before occupied, as I have already stated by Nimrod. Of the family now under consideration we have nothing interesting to report till the time of Terah, who was then living at Ur, in the country last mentioned. Terah, is the first person in the line of Arphaxad, of whom we hear that he left the true God. How long he had abandoned the doctrines of the churches of Adam and Noah, or whether his father before him had abandoned them is nowhere said. Certain however it is, that Terah, the father of Abraham, was an idolater, if the testimony of Joshua be true. "And Joshua said unto all the people, 'thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; *and they served other Gods.*" Joshua c. 24. v. 2. This text has been generally understood as conveying the meaning that all the three had been Idolaters. There are some however, who would willingly make an \* exception

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\* After the third verse of the 28th chap. of the 2nd. Chron. a remarkable addition is made in the *Chaldee* version, but in no other version of the bible; a part of which is as follows, "Abraham escaped from the furnace of fire among the Chaldeans, into which he had been cast by Nimrod, because he would not worship their idols." Hence evidently there must have been a Tradition to this effect, or this fact could not have crept into the text of this ancient version.

in favour of Abraham. But be this as it may, it pleased God especially to interfere to prevent this moral pestilence from spreading among the legitimate children of Abraham. Accordingly he called Abraham out of Ur to Charran, and *made the great covenant with him*, and *instituted the rite of circumcision*, by which he and his children and his children's children were to be kept distinct from all other tribes or nations. Abraham in fact was to be the father of a new race of men or of men to be brought up afresh in those laws and statutes of God, which were then in the way of being lost for ever. Suffice it now to add, that after Abraham came Isaac and after Isaac came Jacob. To these two illustrious patriarchs God in fulfilment of his design renewed the great covenant: both of them in consequence observed the rite now mentioned; both of them had communion with God; both of them endeavoured to keep themselves pure and to do his will. The latter indeed, before he went to Bethel, commanded his household to "*purge themselves of their idols and to be clean.*" Gen. 35. v. 2. He would not allow his servants to have the instruments of idolatry in their possession. This is a proof that idol-worship was known in this part of the world in those days.

I come now in the prosecution of my inquiry to the children of Jacob. These were settled as strangers in the land of Goshen in Egypt, under Pharoah. They give birth to a numerous posterity, which occupied that land till their delivery by Moses, during which sojourning they had increased to six hundred thousand effective men. They were, during all this period, distinguished from the Egyptians both by language and the rite of circumcision. They were also distinguished from them by name, being called Israelites from their great ancestor Jacob, who after wrestling with the angel had his name changed to Israel. The sacred writings do not tell us what their religion was, or whether it had declined during this long interval. We may presume however that they were brought up in the principles of Jacob, or in those patriarchal doctrines which had come down to them in a direct line from Shem, with the addition of the rite of circumcision, and that they continued in these observances for the first eighty years of their residence in Goshen; for during this time Joseph was the prime minister of Pharoah, and having the power, he would naturally have the inclination, to protect his own relatives, all of whom were the descendants of his father Jacob,



in the performance of their religious duties. Besides it has been generally understood, that one of the reasons why Joseph settled them in Goshen, besides that of its being a superior place for the maintenance of their herds and flocks, was that they might be kept distinct from the Egyptians, who as we have shown were at that time idolaters, and that they might serve God without interruption and bring up their children in their own way. After this when the old Pharaoh died, and a new Pharaoh reigned in his stead, they suffered the most cruel persecution; and we cannot doubt that from this time till their delivery by Moses, their situation must have been very unfavourable for the preservation of the true faith. It is true indeed that they had many opportunities, while Pharaoh's Magicians were endeavouring to rival the miracles performed by Moses, of seeing the vast superiority of the God of Israel over the gods of the Egyptians; we have reason however to suppose that many of them must after so long a sojourning there, have been not a little tainted with idolatry. For the Egyptians, as has been just said, had all departed from the true God. Now when we consider that the Israelites lived in their territory, they must have frequently seen their idolatrous

practices; and it is highly probable also, that they would have been frequently importuned by their task-masters, who superintended them daily, to abjure their religion. But there is a fact, which strengthens this supposition. Scarcely had the Israelites left their oppressors and arrived in the wilderness, when doubting the return of Moses who had gone up to mount Sinai to communicate with God, they made a golden calf and worshipped it; a practice, which they could not have adopted all at once, or so readily as they did, if they had had no notion of it or no inclination towards it before. We may also suppose that other circumstances occurred which, if the supposition just made be right, will place them again in a very unfavourable situation with respect to the preservation of the true faith. There is reason to believe that for considerably more than a century, that is, from the death of the first Pharoah when their bitter slavery began, they had been deprived of the religious benefit of the sabbath; for it is not likely that his hard-hearted successors, when they studied to make their bondage as bitter as human nature could bear, would have given them one day in seven as a day of relaxation from their labour and much less as a day for the worship of that

God, whom they and their subjects had discarded: and this conjecture assumes the form of truth when we consider that when Moses celebrated the first sabbath in the wilderness, he did not speak of it *as of a new institution*, but as of a practice, which *had been well known to them or their ancestors*. “And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.” Now what did Moses say in reply? He said unto them, “This is that, which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake that which ye will bake, to day; and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.” Exod. c. 16. v. 22. 23. These were the words of Moses on this occasion, and it appears that the rulers of the congregation understood them, for they made no reply. But how could they possibly have comprehended their meaning (spoken as they were, without any preface or explanation on his part) *if they had never heard of the custom before*. But whether this conjecture be right or wrong, there is reason to suppose that the Israelites were tainted, and not a little tainted, with Idolatry before they left the

land of their bondage. Indeed we have already shewn this by a former quotation, which, having been made for another purpose may have been overlooked by the reader. I will therefore repeat it here. “Then said I unto them, cast ye away every man the abomination of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the Idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. But they (the Israelites when in Egypt) rebelled against me, and would not kearken unto me: *they did not every man cast away the abomination of their eyes, neither did they forsake the Idols of Egypt*; then I said I will pour out my fury upon them to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.” Ezek. c. 20. v. 7. 8. Hence it would appear, that their bitter sufferings in Egypt were a punishment for having begun to desert the God of their fathers in that land. And now, to close our account for this part of the subject, we may collect from all that has been said, that there could have been at this time but very little religious light left among men; that the Israelites were the only people, who then possessed it as a people, but that it had become dim, and was growing daily more dim then among them; many, of them as we have seen, having become Idolaters: and the prospect was, that if God had not

especially interfered, universal darkness would have covered the whole earth, and he himself have been banished from his own world.

We come now to the means, which it pleased God at this particular crisis to take for the preservation of his truths. I have before observed, that the Israelites, degraded as they now appear to have been, were the people, whom God had fixed upon, some ages before, to be the instruments of forwarding his designs. He therefore called these out of Egypt under the auspices of Moses, whom he had prepared to be their leader, and conducted them miraculously to the wilderness, which lay on the other side of the Red Sea. This was the first step: and the next was, at a proper distance of time after their departure from Egypt, to *renew* to them *that religious light, which was contained in the precepts of God to Adam*, and which had been the guide of their forefathers, with such additions, both moral, civil, and ceremonial, as should fit them for the new situation which they were to fill. Accordingly he began by delivering to Moses for their use the law of the two tables, containing the ten commandments, which were engraved on stone; and, to make this delivery the more impressive, “There were thun-

ders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceedingly loud; so that the people in the camp trembled; and mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire." Exod. : c. 19. v. 16. 18. That the ten commandments however now given were nearly the same as, or but little more than, the precepts so often mentioned I think I have already shown. I have shown at any rate by the statements of Moses himself, that five of these commandments, and if Job be admitted an evidence, that no less than seven of them out of the ten, served as rules for the regulation of men's moral conduct in the first ages of the world. There are however divines, and these of high character for learning, who go farther than I have gone upon this point. Bishop Cumberland in his Latin treatise on the patriarchal laws, published in 1724 asserts, "that the patriarchs did most diligently observe all the *great and leading precepts* which related both to God and Man, *before the law was delivered by Moses from Mount Sinai*; and that they were moved to this diligent observance of them by the same great promises, the fear of the same divine judgments, and the terror of the same punishment which the law of

Moses held out." p. 443. He says in another place, "that the patriarchal laws, which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were so careful in observing, were *very like those*, which Moses by the command of God gave the Israelites four hundred and thirty years after Abraham had entered the promised land." p. 441. "They were as like them indeed, *as if the ten commandments had furnished the primary heads from whence the patriarchal laws had been taken.*" The learned Ellis, before quoted, delivers his sentiments upon the subject before us thus. "That these," says he (the laws or precepts given by God to Adam) "*were before the written law and every where binding* appears from the book of Job, wherein most of them or the natural law are to be found, *and that the written law was only a repetition of them* with an addition of some things peculiar to themselves." p. 237. Grotius speaks nearly the same language. "Moses," he says, "*did not enlarge upon those precepts because they were known to all mankind.* These precepts were by God's command transmitted to posterity, but after the dispersion they became much impaired and obscured, and a dark night of ignorance and barbarity covered the earth." (Lib., c. 2. De Jure belli ac Pacis) This is the language of three particularly learned men

on this subject; and if their opinions be well founded, then a notion, which generally prevails, that the Decalogue was the first revelation given by God to man, is not true. That it was the *first written revelation*, there can be no doubt; but no one can say, that God had not revealed his will, concerning the moral conduct of men before.

But to return to the subject. God having called the Israelites out of Egypt and having conducted them in a miraculous manner in safety to the wilderness, renewed to them there, by means of the law of the two tables or ten commandments, that religious knowledge which they had nearly lost. It pleased him next to introduce institutions among them, which should serve as so many helps for preserving it. With this view Moses was directed to erect a tabernacle, and to place in it the ark with the tables containing the ten commandments. By divine appointment also an order of Priests was established to offer sacrifice daily, to watch over and preserve the sacred edifice and utensils from pollution, and at stated times to rehearse in the hearing of all the people the commandments and all the statutes which God had given to Moses. To unite the Israelites in still closer bonds



among themselves, other institutions, such as the Jubilee, New Moons, and Sabbaths, Feasts of various sorts and other sacred and ceremonial observances were appointed, which, while they kept them together, served also as a partition-wall between them and the Gentiles, to preserve them from the contamination of Idolatry. These were the measures which it pleased God to take for the preservation of his truths, and they were carried into execution all of them during the sojourning of the Israelites in the wilderness.

Let us now see how the Israelites conducted themselves during the period of which we have been last speaking. One would have thought that their deliverance from such an oppressive slavery as the Egyptian would have filled them with gratitude to God, and have made them at least fearful of offending him. But this was not the case; they had been but a very short time in the wilderness, when they made a golden calf and worshipped it. One would have thought again, that the delivery of the law of Moses, accompanied as we have seen it to have been by the awful voice of God himself amidst thunder, lightning, and smoke, would have had an immediate effect upon their minds, so as to have made them still more watchful over their future

conduct ; but it appears, that no such impression had been made. Notwithstanding this their deliverance, notwithstanding the denunciations of the Law, notwithstanding the many miracles which God had but a short time before wrought in their favour, and all of which must have been then fresh in their memory, such as the smiting of the first-born among the Egyptians, the passage over the Red Sea as over dry land, the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, the raining down of Quails and Manna when they wanted meat, and the bringing of Water out of the Rock when they wanted drink, they took the very first opportunity, namely that offered to them by the Women of Moab and Midian, (Numbers c. 25. v. 2.) of flying in the face of God, and of shewing their attachment to Idolatry, by joining with these in eating the sacrifices and “bowing the head to Idols.”

My account of their subsequent history will be very short. It appears that, when they came out of the wilderness they carried with them the Law, the Tabernacle, the Priesthood and the Institutions before mentioned to the land of promise. They had therefore evidently the means within themselves of preserving the religious light and knowledge which had been given them.

when they arrived there ; but it pleased God after this to give them additional helps for the same purpose, by raising up among them from time to time a race of holy men and prophets, who should constantly bear witness to his truths and never suffer them to lie dormant or to be invaded without reproof. And now let us ask what was the effect of these combined measures on these people? They kept up no doubt a certain outward knowledge of God and of his will amongst them ; but it is to be feared that few, compared with the great mass of the population, were properly influenced by them ; and that the majority were still Idolaters at heart. Their history in fact, from their departure from the wilderness for centuries afterwards, was little other than a history of rebellions against God, a history of repeated idolatries, of repeated returns to duty, and of repeated relapses into unbelief, many of the people going to the length of sacrificing their children to Moloch in the valley of Hinnom ; so that God at length determined upon making an example of the whole nation. At this time the nation was divided into two kingdoms, that of Israel and that of Judah, the former of which consisted of ten, and the latter of two tribes. Israel according to the divine

purpose was to be punished first. God therefore permitted Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, to carry the whole population of Israel away, men, women, and children, into Media. After this they were divided and dispersed among the inhabitants of the different cities of that country, with whom they were so identified in time, as to have lost their language, dress, manners and customs. They must either have become Medish subjects, or have found their way out of Media to some unknown land, for no one knows what became of them to this day.

The people of Judah had a respite granted them for sometime longer, but neither this respite nor the terrible example made of the people of Israel, availed to produce an alteration in their conduct. They still followed their idolatrous course, kings as well as people, and some of their kings became so hardened as to have profaned the Temple itself, and its courts by introducing idols and images to be worshipped there. This open affront to God by the pollution of his own sanctuary, in the way most hateful to him that could be devised, helped to swell the long catalogue of their crimes; and he resolved at last as if this had been the only cure left for them, to send them captive to Babylon.

At length the day arrived and the people of the kingdom of Judah, then called Jews, were delivered with few exceptions into the hands of the Babylonians. Here they paid the penalties of their former disobedience; here they suffered all the miseries of slavery; its tiresome labour, its hunger, nakedness, and want; its cruel scourges, its insults and degradations; and in this situation they remained for many years till their spirits were broken down by affliction.

This then was a proper season for repentance, and it appears that they availed themselves of it. The mercies of God to their forefathers, and their own wickedness and ingratitude must have frequently broken in upon their minds. The words of Moses and of the Prophets must have been frequently brought to their recollection, and have occasioned both self-abasement and self-condemnation; and it is to be presumed that God was pleased to sanctify these their meditations, the consequence of which was that, when they were permitted to depart from the land of their captivity they went out of it, very generally with minds properly chastened and humbled. On returning to their own land, they began to rebuild their temple. This was the first fruits or the first visible proof of their reformation.

They then put in force the laws and sacred institutions of their ancestors; and, though more than five hundred years elapsed from the time of their deliverance from captivity in Babylon, to the coming of the Messiah, they continued all this time as a nation in the observance of them. They kept their new moons and their sabbaths and their various feasts with the most scrupulous exactness, and caused obedience to be paid to the commandments of Moses, so that even Idolatry, the most difficult of all sin to eradicate, no longer disgraced the land. It is a fact that after the Babylonish captivity and the rebuilding of the Temple (which Temple afterwards underwent various vicissitudes of spoliation and pollution by foreigners) the Jews themselves had no more concern with Idols. Thus did Jehovah miraculously preserve, by means of the Israelites and the Jews, the religious light which he had given to Adam four thousand years before; and having thus extirpated Idolatry from among them, *as a previously necessary measure*, it was then, and not till then, that he sent his son Jesus Christ into the world. I say a *previously necessary measure*, because if our Saviour had come upon earth before this time, he would not, humanly speaking, have been pro-

perly supported in his mission. There could not have been found before this time any one nation or people, so generally instructed and so firmly established in the belief of God, as the Creator of Heaven and Earth, as that there could have been taken from the lower orders belonging to it, persons to be relied upon as Apostles for executing his great designs. The people of Israel were the only people from the time of Moses to the time of which we speak, who had any knowledge of the true God, and a great part of these during this long period were Idolaters. Now I ask at what time were these in a state to have sent out from their own body men capable of teaching the truth and willing to die for it? Certainly not when they were in Egypt; nor when they were in the wilderness; nor when they were under Joshua; nor lastly when they were under their kings; for a part of them were sent among the Medes to be annihilated as a people, and the other part were sent captive to Babylon; both of them *as a punishment for their unbelief*. It appears then that Jesus Christ came into the world just at the time when every thing had been prepared for him; just at the time when he was enabled to choose out of the purified Jews Apostles qualified for their office. Suffice it to

say that he chose these, and that he commanded them, after he had instructed them in all things necessary, to travel into foreign parts, and to give back to all the benighted nations of the earth all the religious knowledge, which their ancestors had lost; nay more, to restore it to them with increased splendour, by adding to it the superior light of the gospel. And here we may have a clearer view, than is perhaps usually taken of the truth and beauty of those words in the scriptures, which Jesus Christ spoke relative to his own mission when he said that he was come “to save that which was lost;” for all the sons of Shem, all the sons of Ham, and all the sons of Japhet, except the handful of Jews just mentioned, had lost, as we have now seen, the knowledge of the true God when he appeared among men. And thus did God himself show to the whole world, that he was not willing that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting life.

I shall now endeavour to draw from the foregoing pages such conclusions, as I hope may be found useful. The first lesson, which we may learn from them, is this, that the first knowledge which men had of the being of a God and of God as the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of his



attributes, and of their duty towards him, did not come from their own intuitive faculties or from their own reasonings on the subject; but by a revelation, an oral \* revelation, from God himself; and that if God had never given them such a revelation, they could never have known him at all; for how indeed could they have acquired this knowledge of themselves? Certainly not by the light of reason; for if this had been possible then the learned Greeks, who were among the most acute of the sons of Japhet, would have recovered that knowledge of God, which their ancestors had lost. But this they were never able to do, though “the first great cause of the universe” *had been the subject of their inquiry for ages*. St. Paul confirms this statement when (alluding to the philosophers to whom we ourselves have just alluded) he says “the world by wisdom knew not God.” The truth is, that God is a being invisible and undefinable; but if so, then who, as Job says, “by searching can find him out”? There are no data to go upon in such a search; no axiom that can be applied to help us; no one point visible or imaginary on

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\* I never heard any other supposition than that, when God spoke to Adam, Eve, Cain or Noah, he spoke to them with his own holy voice, and that he did the same to Moses on Mount Sinai.

which the mind can rest to argue the case. Neither could men have come to the knowledge of God, such knowledge as is here meant, by the light of nature; for if nature could have furnished such knowledge, then the contemplation of the heavenly bodies, whose influences in giving light and heat and fertility to the earth have occasioned so much admiration and astonishment among men, would have furnished it; but so far was this from having been the case, that they who had cultivated Astronomy and Astrology as sciences in the then infancy of the world, went off from the worship of the true God into Idolatry; making a mistake, by ascribing to the *creature* what only belonged to the *Creator*. Hence we see that the religion, which we profess, is a real revelation from God and not a cunningly devised fable.

But if the above be true, it will follow that, when God created man and made him a responsible being, he did not subject himself to the charge of injustice, such as of having left him without sufficient light to guide him in his spiritual concerns. Nor did he subject himself to such a charge afterwards, for it has appeared that, when the men of the new world were likely through their own unbelief to lose the religious light which he had

given to their ancestors, so as to have gone into total darkness, he interfered to preserve it. This he did by calling Abraham out of Ur, and making his legitimate descendants his instruments for this purpose. With this view he gave them, among other things, in exchange for the old precepts, which had been hitherto committed to memory but then nearly lost, the *written law*. And it has appeared again that, when these had, through the divine assistance, performed the work allotted to them, at least as far as it was necessary for this purpose, he sent Jesus Christ into the world to give new light in addition to that which had been already given, and to disperse the whole of it among all nations, making no distinction between Jew and Gentile. So far then was God from being chargeable in this respect, that we find that he never ceased to exercise a fatherly care over his creatures, for their spiritual welfare, by revelations from time to time ever since the beginning of the world. These revelations have come down to us through the Holy Scriptures, and it is upon these, and not upon the light of nature or our own foolish reasonings, as I said before, that, we build our religion at the present day.

We learn secondly from these pages, that sin

is not sin because the action done is contrary to what is called expediency or the supposed fitness of things, but because it is a transgression of the revealed laws of God; and in this view of the subject we are confirmed both by the old and the new testament. In the fourth chapter of Leviticus we find, that the Israelites were required *to make expiation for every thing done against the commandments*, which God had given them through Moses. What then must sin have been at this time, or what could it only have been, but the breaking of any of these commandments? St. Paul also speaks the same language. “I had not known sin but by the law,” that is, unless the law of God contained in his commandments had told me what it was.

We learn thirdly, from these pages the natural depravity of the human heart, or the almost constant propensity there is in man to go astray, and also the necessity there is for constant care and vigilance on his part, and also for the divine aid to keep him in the right way; for we have seen that all the nations, which sprung from Shem, Ham, and Japhet, went off into Idolatry, the one after the other (no doubt for want of watchfulness) and that this departure from God would have been probably universal, if it had not pleased God to

reclaim and purify and strengthen one family, namely, that of Abraham; and we know again, that the legitimate descendants of this family were only kept within the bounds of their duty by the same especial interference, that is, by miracles and by warnings, which it pleased God to give them, and by punishments which he was pleased to inflict upon them from time to time.

We are enabled fourthly, to confirm from the same pages, if confirmation were wanted, the truth of that declaration of St. Paul, "that God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" Acts. c. 17. v. 26. for whatever difference there may be in the colour of the skins of men, as they now live scattered over the different parts of the earth, they are all of them either the descendants of Shem, or of Ham, or of Japhet. This difference therefore must have been entirely accidental. And we are warranted again in saying this, for we have seen that a whole nation, which can be proved to have sprung from Cush, one of the sons of Ham, had become black in the time of Jeremiah, "Can the descendant of Cush change his colour or the Leopard his spots, then may ye also do good who are accustomed to do evil." (Jer. c. 13. v. 23.\*

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\* For an elucidation of this see the Appendix.

Another argument, but of a very different nature from that which has been just used, may be collected from these pages to establish the same truth; namely, that all mankind, however they may differ one nation from the other in language, customs, or colour, sprung from one and the same stock. We have already seen that God in his intercourse with Adam ordained worship by sacrifice. Now how can we account for the fact, that this custom, *the custom of sacrifice*, should have obtained among all the nations of antiquity both before and in our Saviour's time, as well as among all the newly discovered people since? Can we account for it by saying, that the custom was natural or agreeable to reason? No—for nothing could have been more unnatural or unreasonable. I wish for instance to obtain mercy from God for my past sins. But what do I do to procure it? I do an unmerciful act myself by taking away the life of a poor animal, which I had no plea for killing, either because I wanted food or because I feared any injury from it. In fact the difficulty can only be solved by admitting the Bible-account to be true, namely, that the different nations of men, which are now, or which have ever been upon our earth, sprung from two parents, and that God commanded sacrifice to be offered by these. This having been admitted,

the custom must have gone down from our first parents to Noah, and from Noah to his descendants on the plain of Shinar, where it must have prevailed at the time of the dispersion, from which time it is easy to see how it could have been spread over the whole world.

**END OF FIRST PART.**





## APPENDIX.

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The descendants of Cush spoken of by Jeremiah were probably the Cuseans or Cushites of Abyssinia, though they might have been the Arabians, who were a dark-coloured people, and descended from Cush also. But this change of colour was not confined at that time to these two nations. The Egyptians of the Nile according to Herodotus had dark faces also, and likewise woolly hair. Many also of the descendants both of Shem and Japhet are now black, who originally found their way into India, where their posterity have remained since. The ancients considered this change of colour to have been produced by climate; for the Greek word rendered Ethiopian means *the man with the sun-burnt face*. I am

partly of this opinion, and I think it right to give a few reasons here in support of it.

In the first place it is an established fact, *that all children*, all children whatever, whether the sons and daughters of Europeans, Africans, Asiatics, or Americans are born of a dullish red colour. The child of the blackest negro is of the same colour when it comes into the world, as the child of the fairest white; and he continues of the same colour for about a month, when his skin assumes the appearance of a pale yellow. In process of time it becomes brown, and his skin after this continues to increase in darkness with his age, till it reaches his countrymen's colour. It is of great importance that this fact should have been established: for it shews us, that the difference of colour in grown up people in the different regions of the earth, is *not natural* (nature having only to do with *one colour at the birth*) but that it is wholly *accidental* or *dependent upon circumstances*. It also favours the Bible-account just mentioned, that all the different nations of men came originally from one and the same stock.

Having made this observation we may now mention a fact, another fact, which will enable us to make a reasonable conjecture as to what might be at least one of the incidental causes or circum-

stances from which this difference of colour might arise. If we were to take a common globe, and begin at the equator and paint one of the countries lying upon it, and all the other countries lying above this country in succession from thence to the pole, and to paint them with the colour, which is found to be the colour of the skins of the respective inhabitants of each, we should see the black, with which we should have been obliged to begin, changing through certain intermediate degrees of colour to an olive, and the olive changing through other intermediate degrees to a white. Now this generally regular and gradual change of colour in the persons of men from black to white as you travel through the different degrees of latitude from the equator to the pole, would lead us at once, if not force us to conclude, that the sun, whose power is found to vary in the same manner, that is, according to the different degrees of latitude, must have a considerable influence in the production of the colour of the skins of the different inhabitants of the earth. Nor am I aware of more than one objection that might be made here, and this might be soon answered. It might be said that all the different tribes of people living in the same parallel of latitude are not precisely of the same colour.

Hence the gradation of colour from the equator to the pole just mentioned would not be quite so regular as we have held it to be. But this is no real objection to the argument; for every different country lying within the same parallel has not the same climate. High mountains in the neighbourhood of a place make it cooler. Large spreading succulent plants, if among the productions of the soil, have the same effect. They afford agreeable cooling shades, and a moist atmosphere from their continual exhalations, by which also the ardour of the sun is abated; while the soil on the other hand, if of a sandy nature, retains the heat, and makes the summers considerably hotter than those, which are found to exist in the same latitude where the soil is different. To the proximity of what may be called burning sands, and to the sulphureous and metallic particles, which are constantly exhaling from the bowels of the earth, have been ascribed the different degrees of blackness, by which some African nations are distinguished from each other though living under the same parallel. To these observations I may add that, though the inhabitants of the same parallel are not always exactly of the same hue, yet they differ only by shades of the same colour, that is, there are no

two nations in such a situation there, that one of them is black and the other white.

I may now state that anatomical researches have produced a discovery, which is of the greatest importance to us in the present case. It has been found that the human skin consists of three lamina or parts, namely, the first or outward skin, which we see, feel, and handle; the inner, which is invisible to us; and a certain coagulated or mucous substance called the *Rete Mucosum*, which lies between the other two and adheres to both. Now the first or outward skin, which we see and touch, is of a dullish white and semi-transparent, and this is the same in both respects in men of all colours, the outward skin of the black man being of the same colour and transparency as that of the white. Where then in the human skin, it may be asked, is that colour *seated*, by means of which, when we see it, we denominate one man white, another brown, another olive, another copper, and another black. Anatomists have discovered it to be seated in the intermediate mucous substance just mentioned. This substance then being impregnated or dyed with any colour, whatever it may be, such as black, brown, or white, transmits it to our eyes through the transparency of the outward skin:

and that the *Rete Mucosum* is the seat of colour in the human body, has been confirmed by other circumstances. Diseases for example have often a great effect upon it, but particularly the jaundice, which turns it yellow. Hence, the outward skin being semi-transparent, the yellow colour of the body of the invalid. But this appearance is not confined solely to the white people. Negroes themselves, while affected by this disorder, change their black colour for the yellow, which the disorder conveys to the mucous substance of their skins.

It appears then from what has been said above, that the colour of the mucous substance makes the colour of the outward man; and it has been insinuated in the course of this enquiry, that the action of the sun upon the mucous substance, might possibly produce a similar effect upon his outward appearance; I shall therefore now put these two considerations together, that is, I shall now attempt to show how the rays of the sun may so act upon this substance as to give it a colour, and also such a variety of colour, as to enable us to form a conjecture how the difference of colour so visible in the skins of the different inhabitants of the earth may have been originally in part occasioned. This may be done by ex-

plaining the way in which freckles are said to be produced. These are frequently to be seen in the faces of children even in our own climate, but of such only as have the thinnest or most transparent outward skins, and are occasioned by the rays of the sun striking forcibly on the mucous substance beneath the skin of the face and producing perspiration or drops of sweat, and then drying the accumulated fluid. This accumulated fluid or perspired matter is at first colourless, and being exposed to heat and thereby dried becomes yellow and then brown. Hence the mucous substance being tinged or dyed in various parts by this coagulated fluid, and the parts so tinged appearing through the outward skin which is semi-transparent, arises that spotted appearance observable on the faces of freckled persons. But let us now suppose the rays of the sun to act so universally on the mucous substance beneath the skin in a person's face, as to produce these spots so contiguous to each other that they should unite and form one mass of freckles, we should then see a face similar to those, which are daily to be seen among coloured people; and if we were to suppose his body to be constantly exposed to the sun and atmosphere, and acted upon in the same manner, we should then see his

body as well as his face assuming a similar appearance, and thus we should see the whole man resembling one of the naked inhabitants of one of the hotter zones. Now as the seat of freckles and of the blackness of a man's skin is the same, and as the cause of the first is the ardour of the sun, it is most likely that one of the causes of the second is the same: and this suggestion seems to be confirmed by another consideration; for if blackness is occasioned by the rays of the sun striking forcibly and universally on the mucous substance of the skin of a man's body, and causing perspirable matter to come there, and drying it when produced, we may account for the different degrees of it to be found in the different inhabitants of the globe; for as the quantity of perspirable fluid or matter and the force of the solar rays are successively increased as the climates are successively warmer from the poles to the equator, it follows that the fluid or matter, with which the mucous substance will be tinged, will be successively thicker and deeper coloured, and hence as it appears, or shines through the outer skin, the complexion will be successively darker, or, what amounts to the same thing, there will be a difference of colour in the inhabitants of every successive parallel.



Now, having proceeded thus far, I think that we may safely come at least to one conclusion, which is, that if a child were born of *white parents in the torrid zone, and to go naked* like the natives there, and to attain the age of *forty or fifty years, the whole mucous substance of his body from head to foot* would be so completely dyed by the sun by that time, that his flesh would most likely exhibit the appearance of a yellowish brown, and that he might with as much propriety be called a yellow brown, as a negro is called a black man; and that he might with as much propriety be considered as belonging to a different race of men from the black or white man, as the black or the white man is now too often considered as belonging to a different race from him. But I shall stop here, and leave others to follow the clue which I have furnished. I shall leave it to others to enquire whether there may not be other causes which have an influence in tinging the mucous substance of the human body; and also whether the colour of the inhabitants of any country after a residence in it for several centuries, be the colour black, brown, olive, or white, may not, *during that long time* have become so incorporated into their constitutions as that it may have been transmitted to

their children, and yet not so entirely or permanently as not to be capable of undergoing a gradual change upon their removal to an entirely different climate. There are instances in history of black people removed centuries ago to what may be called a white latitude, who are now white; and, on the other hand of white people removed to what may be called a black latitude who are not only now as black as the aboriginal inhabitants but who may be seen with the woolly hair of these and even with their features. I have myself known instances of persons carried from Africa to the West Indies and brought from thence to this country, whose colour in the course of from twenty to thirty years became less dark by some shades than when they arrived here.

A N T E D I L U V I A N ,  
P A T R I A R C H A L ,  
A N D O T H E R R E S E A R C H E S .

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PART II.

We have seen in the preceding Essay, that the first men gained all their religious knowledge from God himself, but that they had made so bad a use of it, or that so many of them had gone off, and so many more were on the point of going off into idolatry, even so early as the time of Abraham, that, if it had not pleased God to interfere, the probability was, that every family then upon earth (for the inhabitants of the whole world then lay within a very small compass) would in a short time have been infected by this moral contagion. We have seen again that God

did thus actually interfere by selecting Abraham to *preserve his truths*, from whose loins also a long line of descendants should spring *for the same purpose*, such as Isaac, Jacob, David and others, and that from the last in this line the Messiah should come. And we have seen again, that, when the Messiah actually appeared, all the known world had lost the knowledge of the true God (which God himself had given to their ancestors,) except the descendants of Abraham just mentioned, and that it was his, the Messiah's object, to renew to all those, both living and to come, the light which their ancestors had thus lost, and to accompany it with new light of greater splendour than the former, by which they should be enabled to see new prospects; and to lay before them a grand scheme of salvation for the human race. Now when we consider that the coming of the Messiah was the greatest and most glorious event that ever took place in the world, we should have judged it probable, speaking as men, that God would have given such intimations of it before-hand, that, not only men would be looking out for such a personage before he came, but that when he came, he should answer the description contained in these notices so clearly, that he would be recognized generally

as the person sent. And in fact, such notices were given. It is my intention therefore to inquire, what these notices or intimations were, and how the different people of the earth acquired them, and whether, when Jesus Christ came into the world, he answered the character which had thus been given of him.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The different notions which prevailed at this time on this subject—among the Jews—the Samaritans—the people of the East, and the Romans.*

That there were people living in different nations, who expected some extraordinary person to come upon earth just before or about the time of the birth of Christ is an historical fact. All the Jews, from the high priest to the peasant, were in daily expectation of the Messiah, exactly at the time when he came. They had an idea that he would be born in Judea. They expected.

that he would be to them a king, a conqueror, and a deliverer from the Roman yoke, and that the Gentiles would be brought under their dominion. They spoke of him also as a Redeemer. "They trusted that it had been he, who should have redeemed Israel." Luke. c. 24. v. 21. By Redeemer they meant in general a deliverer as before; but the more pure-hearted and better-instructed among them believed that he would bring peace and rest to them, by which they would be enabled to study more attentively the law and the commandments; the consequence of which would be, that the reign of sin would be extinguished, and the reign of righteousness would succeed it; while there were some of the learned among them, as Dr. Lightfoot informs us, "who indulged a notion that he would raise the dead, and gather them together in the garden of Eden to partake of the joys thereof." They looked forward to him also in the character of a restorer "Lord, wilt thou at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel, "(Acts. 1. 6.) that is, restore the kingdom of David to its ancient glory. It will be seen from this account, that the views of the Jews were for the most part worldly on this subject.

The people of Samaria also, a spurious race

descended from those Jews, who had married heathen women, and who on this account kept themselves separate from the Jews, though they lived next to them, had their expectation of some great personage to come, as appears from our Saviour's conversation with the woman at Jacob's well. "I know, said the woman, that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ." John, c. 4. v. 25. But to see in what character he was to appear according to their notions, it will be proper to refer to a part of the conversation, which took place on that occasion. Our Saviour having made a beautiful comparison between the water of the well, and the living water which it was in his power to bestow, proceeded to a new topic, namely, the worship of God. He informed the woman, that a great change was about to take place in this respect; for that God was a spirit, and that he was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. At present they worshipped they knew not what. To this the woman answered "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all things." Here then are two declarations of the woman shewing what were her own notions on this subject; the first that Messiah was expected, the second that he would come in the capacity of a

*teacher of religion.* “He will tell us all things.” And here what is meant by “all things,” but all those things, which related to the worship which had been mentioned? It is remarkable that our Saviour had not yet himself said one word about the Messiah, but yet the woman immediately, I repeat immediately, upon hearing of the spiritual reformation that was to take place, herself mentioned his name, as the name of him who was to instruct them on that subject. But to go on. It appears that when the conversation, of which I have now given but a part, was ended, the woman returned to Sychar, the place of her abode, and informed the inhabitants of what she had seen and heard. This produced a great desire in them to see the stranger, with whom she had conversed. Accordingly they went out of the city and came to him. “So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them. And he abode there two days; and many more believed on him because of his own words, and said unto the woman, now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, *the Saviour of the world.*” Here then we have two declarations as before, but these were made by the whole



city. The first of them was similar to that of the woman, namely, that the Samaritans were in expectation of the Messiah; but the second gave a new view of his character. He was to come according to the apprehensions of the people of Sychar, not only in the capacity of a preacher or teacher of religion, but *as the Saviour of the world*: and here it may be remarked, that the word "world," used in this place, does not mean, as it often does in the new Testament, the little petty world of Judea but the *whole inhabited world*, consisting of Gentiles as well as Jews. Thus the Samaritans, who had less means of light, appear to have had a more accurate knowledge than their proud neighbours the Jews, of the true character of the Messiah.

A report was also very current among the nations of the East at that time, that a great personage was to make his appearance whom all the world should obey. It will be only necessary to quote the words of two such respectable and learned authors as Tacitus and Suetonius, to prove this. "Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso Tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum Potirentur." (Tacit: His. L. 5. P. 621. "Pererebuerat Oriente toto vetus & constans opinio esse in fatis. ut eo tempore Judæa

Profecti rerum potirentus." (Sueton: in vit: Vesp: c. 4.) These writers, we see, speak nearly the same language as to the point in question. Both agree in this, that the great personage here alluded to should have universal dominion. Both agree that he was to come out of Judæa. Both agree that the belief thus entertained was not merely common but very current in the East; indeed Suetonius says, throughout the whole East, which would include Egypt, the three Arabias, Palestine, Syria, Assyria, Chaldea, Babylonia and other countries. Both agree again in this, that it was a belief of ancient standing, and Suetonius farther explains it by the word "constans," from which we may infer that the subject was then constantly talked of, or that there was no variation in men's opinions concerning it.

Nor was this notion confined to them. It was entertained by many at Rome a few years before Jesus Christ was born, where an expectation prevailed at that time, that some great man was about to make his appearance who should be a King or Emperor, and who should hold a beneficent dominion over the whole world. But as I shall go very largely into this subject, in another part of this work, I shall content myself at present with having barely mentioned the fact.

## CHAPTER II.

*On the particular way in which the Jews obtained their particular notions on this subject.*

Having now shewn the different notions which were entertained by the different people mentioned, as to the character of the extraordinary person who was expected to come upon earth, I shall endeavour to point out the way in which each of them obtained his own particular notion, and this in the order in which I noticed them in the last chapter.

The Jews acquired their knowledge of the extraordinary person who was expected in the world and of the time of his coming by a perusal of the books of Moses, and of those other books which form, what we usually call the Old Testament. If a Jew, living before the time of our Saviour, had the Pentateuch on his hand, he could not fail of being struck, before he had gone over the first three chapters of Genesis, with the

prophecy which God delivered to our first parents when he denounced the curse upon the serpent. He would see there, that God created man in his own image, but that he fell soon afterwards from innocence into sin; and that on account of this sin, he incurred an awful sentence, which made a most melancholy change as to his privileges and condition. He would see also that the serpent or the deceiver was degraded and punished, but at the same time that a prospect was held out to Adam and his posterity, that some one of the seed of his wife should spring up at a future time, who should bruise the deceiver's head, that is, subdue the deceiver, and thus deliver them from the dominion of sin. Hence this Jew would do as the other Jews actually did; he would draw from the prophecy two characters of him who was to come; for if he was to subdue the serpent, he would view him in the light of *a conqueror*; and if this serpent was supposed to be Satan, he would consider him as a *deliverer from sin and evil*.

But there were other prophecies in the Pentateuch, which described the character of the same personage. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gather-

ing of the people be." Gen. c. 49, v. 10. By Shiloh the Jews understood the Messiah, and by the people (which ought to have been translated *peoples*;) they understood, and very properly, all the nations of the earth, the Gentiles as well as themselves. But the prophecy says that in his time, the time of Shiloh, this great gathering of the nations was to take place. How then did the Jews understand it? They interpreted it according to their own prejudices. They had been accustomed to consider the Gentiles as little better than dogs; they were neither to eat nor to drink with them. Indeed Moses for wise purposes had made a partition-wall between the two. They could not therefore comprehend how such a gathering, that is, how such a union of nations could be effected except by conquest; and as this was very gratifying to their pride, they believed that the Gentiles were to be brought under their government, and hence the notion that their Messiah was to hold dominion over the whole world.

Another prophecy in the Pentateuch, which would give the Jews new views of the character of their Messiah, is that remarkable one by Moses himself in the wilderness. "The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet from

the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken." Deut. c. 18, v. 15. This prophecy, namely, that the great personage who was to come should be like unto Moses, gave such a latitude to the imagination of the Jews on this subject, that there was no end to the favourable interpretation they might give of it, both as regarded him or themselves. In the first place, Moses was a king among his own people. He was also a deliverer, that is, a deliverer from Egyptian bondage. He was the conqueror of the Canaanites, a Gentile nation. He was a great law-giver. He was at the head of the church of Israel. He was supreme judge of the people, and he was the mediator between God and man in his own time.

There were also other prophecies in the Pentateuch, which would shew what the character of the Messiah was to be, but as some of these will be introduced for examination with more propriety in the next chapter, I shall go to the books of the Prophets which were of later date, where the same great personage was pointed out and his offices described. The Jews would find there more and more particulars relating to their Messiah. They would learn there the very family from which he was to spring ; the

very place in which he was to be born ; the nature of his mission ; the character which he was to sustain ; the very time when he was to come upon earth, and other most important circumstances, so as in fact to have all the knowledge necessary for their conviction on this subject.

It is not necessary that I should cite here all the Prophecies which contain the particulars just mentioned, but there is one, which I cannot omit bringing forward in this place. The prophecy is this. “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks : the streets shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times.” Daniel c. 9. v. 24. 25.

I may now observe on this prophecy, that it was one of the most remarkable as well as valuable of all the prophecies contained in the sacred

records; for in the first place it fixed the coming of the Messiah so precisely in point of time, that every Jew was enabled to inform himself when (within a very short period) he was to appear upon earth. It is well known that computation by weeks of years was common among the Jews. It follows therefore by means of such a way of computation, that, to complete the prophecy, there would be four-hundred and ninety years from the seventh year of Artaxerxes, when Ezra received the commandment to go and rebuild Jerusalem and restore the Jewish worship, to the making reconciliation for iniquity or the death of Christ. This prophecy then afforded ground to the Jews to expect that this great personage would appear before the expiration of this period. And it is generally understood that Jesus Christ began his ministry, just about three years before this period was completed. In the second place this prophecy portrayed the character and offices of him, who was to come, with as much exactness as it had done the time of his appearance. What says the prophecy? "To anoint the most holy," the great personage expected therefore was to be anointed or consecrated the prophet, priest and king of mankind. "To make reconciliation for iniquity," he was



to expiate iniquity by offering his own body on the cross, and thus to reconcile men to God. "To make an end of sins," that is, of sin offerings; for when the great ante-type was sacrificed, there was no need of any farther sacrifices. "To finish," that is, to restrain "the transgression," he was to restrain the transgression by the preaching of his gospel and the pouring out of the holy spirit among men. "To seal up the vision and prophecy," he was to put an end to the necessity of any further revelations, or any farther prophecies. "To bring in *everlasting* righteousness," he was to introduce a reign of righteousness into the world, which righteousness should be as everlasting as the reign or dominion itself, that is, as the dispensation, afterwards called the gospel, which produced it. This new reign was to produce principles, which if accompanied by the Holy Spirit, would always and everlastingly cleanse the heart of him who received them, and dispose it to universal good. And this righteousness would be everlasting in another sense: for it would always and for ever be acknowledged by God, while men lived upon earth, as the true righteousness, the only righteousness (whatever might be thought to be righteousness by men) and for ever acknow-

ledged by him as such, and rewarded by him as such, in Heaven. Hence there would be in this reign, as far as it should be diffused, an everlasting tendency to restore that image of God in the heart of man, which he had lost.

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### CHAPTER III.

*On the particular way in which the Samaritans gained their particular notions on the same subject.*

I must now enquire where the people of Samaria gained their more enlightened views on this subject. It is notorious that they discarded all the books of the prophets, in fact all the books of the Old Testament, beginning with Joshua and ending with Malachi, as well as all those, which go under the name of the Apocrypha. It is however equally true that they received and held in high estimation the five books of Moses,

of which they are said to have possessed the most perfect copies. It must therefore have been from a perusal and a very careful perusal of these that they acquired their superior knowledge. They could not possibly have obtained it from any other quarter.

But if the Samaritans could have collected their information on this subject from the Pentateuch alone, it follows that they must have drawn a good part of it from the prophecies cited in a former chapter; and this will oblige me, though unwillingly, to advert to these again. And first it appears that the Samaritans gave a wider meaning to the prophecy respecting the serpent, than the Jews had done. They considered that the moral deliverance, which this prophecy pointed out, was to be *universal*, that is, that it admitted of no exceptions as to particular families or nations; but that it was to extend to the whole human race. It is clear then, that one of the characters in which they expected the Messiah to come was that of an *universal deliverer* from the power of Satan, and if this was so, we see that they were warranted in saying of him, as they did at Sychar, that he was to be *the Saviour of the world*.

It appears again, that they differed most

widely from the Jews in the interpretation of the prophecy relative to Shiloh. It is said there that in him, or in his reign, "the gathering of the peoples ( Jews and Gentiles) should be." They did not understand by these words, as the Jews did, that the Jews and Gentiles should be *made one people by conquest*, and live together under one dominion. They understood them in a religious or scriptural sense. Thus when men were gathered together in the Jewish Synagogues, it was for the purpose of *religious instruction*. In like manner "gathering together" taken in such a sense, stood with them for preaching or teaching. They believed therefore, that the words "the gathering of the *peoples*" meant, that the Jews and Gentiles though living in different lands and under different governments, were to go to the same School, or Tabernacle, or Temple, which they might be properly said to do, if they were to receive the same divine truths, or *to be taught alike* the truths of the new dispensation which was at hand; and therefore they believed that the extraordinary person, who was to come, would come as the *preacher* or *teacher* of a religion whose doctrines should be, not for any particular people, but for the whole world. With respect to the other prophecy cited, the prophecy

of Moses in the wilderness, that the great person expected should be "like unto him," we may pronounce from what we have just said, and from what will be said shortly, that the Samaritans must have interpreted it also in a spiritual manner; and, if so, then that the person expected should come in the character of a King, Conqueror, Deliverer, Lawgiver, Priest and Mediator between God and Man.

The Samaritans would find also the character attached to the Messiah, namely, that of a preacher or teacher, in those promises or prophecies given in the book of Genesis relative to Jacob, by which we are led to understand, though very improperly, on account of the mistranslation, that he was to be the father of many nations. These promises or prophecies are mentioned in three places, but not exactly in the same terms. In the first of them, Isaac says to Jacob—"God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people." (Gen. c. 28. v. 3.) In the second God is represented as saying to Jacob, "I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall come out of thee," (Gen. c. 35. v. 11) In the third Jacob says to his son Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me

at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me ; “ Behold ! I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of *peoples* ” (Gen. c. 48. v. 3—4 The late learned Bishop Horseley contends, that these different quotations contain a prophecy that the Messiah should come into the world as an *universal teacher* ; and that this would have appeared clear if all the words had been properly translated. That our translation is not correct is evident from this one circumstance, that the meaning which it conveys, is contrary to historical facts ; for Jacob never was the father of many nations. If this had been said of Abraham it would have been true ; for he was the father of the Arabians in part, and of the Idumœans, and through Jacob of the Israelites also ; but Jacob was the father of *the Israelites only*. The translation ought to have been, in the two first quotations, “ I will make thee for the *gathering together* of the nations ; ” and in the third, “ the *gathering together of the nations*, ” (in Christ for the purpose of instruction and salvation) “ shall be from thee. ” And here I may observe, that this new translation of the passages in question corresponds exactly with what I have already stated that Jacob himself predicted of the office of the Messiah under

the name of Shiloh, when he said “unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” And that this was no fanciful interpretation of the Bishop, I shall show immediately. First the late Dr. Adam Clarke, a master of the Hebrew Language, and a most careful interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, in commenting upon the third verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis says, that the strict meaning of the words “that thou mayest be a multitude of people,” is that thou mayest be for an *assembly, congregation, or church of peoples,*” referring, no doubt to the Jewish Church in the wilderness, but more particularly to the *Christian Church*, composed of every kindred and nation and people and tongue. Secondly we find the same translation as the Bishop gives, in the Greek Version of the Bible, made by the Seventy many hundred years ago at Alexandria, and now in common use, with only this slight difference, viz: that the Hebrew word, which stands for “gathering,” is in each place in the Septuagint made plural, or “gatherings.” This leads the Bishop to suppose, that in the copy, from which the Seventy made their translation, a letter was added in the word, which has been omitted in the copy from which our translation was made. This letter, he tells us, is one which transcribers

have been very apt to omit, and he inclines the more to believe that it was in the copy from whence the Greek translation was made, because the word with the addition of this letter, though not improperly translated "gatherings," might with equal propriety have been translated "the preacher." It is in fact the self-same word, he says, which in the book of Ecclesiastes is translated "the preacher." The learned Bishop therefore is of opinion that the Samaritans, who must have had some of the oldest and best copies of the books of Moses in their possession, could not but have expected the Messiah to come into the world as a teacher of religion to all nations.

They would collect also that he would come in this character from another prophecy in the Pentateuch, which will be found in the second, third, fourth, and fifth verses of the Song of Moses before his death; (Deut. c. 33.) which the same learned prelate translates thus.

"Jehovah came from Sinai;  
 "His uprising was from Seir;  
 "He displayed his glory from Mount Paran;  
 "And from the midst of the myriads " (of attendant  
 angels) " came forth the Holy One,  
 "On his right hand, streams of fire.  
 "O'loving father of the *peoples* !



“All the saints are in thy hand,

“They are seated at thy feet

“And received thy doctrine.

“To us he” (the Holy One) “prescribed a law.”  
(the Law of Moses)

“Jacob is the inheritance of the preacher.

“He” (the preacher) “shall be King in \* Jeshurun

“When the chiefs of the peoples gather themselves  
together

“In union with the tribes of Israel.”

Thus says the learned Bishop, “it appears that in this prophecy of Moses, if we have rightly divined its meaning, the Messiah is explicitly described under the character of a preacher, in whose spiritual kingdom Jews and Gentiles shall be admitted as the subjects of a common Lord.”

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\* Jeshurun, not the name of a place; it signifies the whole body of the justified.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The particular way in which the people of the East acquired their knowledge on this subject.*

I have already said that a belief also prevailed in Arabia, Chaldæa, Babylonia and other parts of the East, that about the time when Jesus Christ came into the world, there should arise in Judæa one, who should rule the whole world. I stated also that this was grounded on the authority of Tacitus and Suetonius, and I made an extract from each of these authors to prove the point. Indeed I might have cited others to the same purport. The question then now is, How did the Arabians, Babylonians and all those people, which were known by the Romans, in the time of these authors, as the people of the whole East, get their knowledge on this subject? One of them, Tacitus, whose work “de moribus Germanorum” will always be a monument of his

faithful representations of what he heard and saw (for from that book we may trace most of the feudal customs of our own ancestors) tells us, that this belief was founded on “antiquis sacerdotum literis,” that is, certain ancient records or writings, which some priests had left behind them. But who were the priests living in these countries before Tacitus, whose records thus survived them? As they are not named by him we must give the best answer we can ourselves. We may say therefore, that these could be only the Magi, (the higher order of priests) or the common priests of the country, or certain priests or prophets of the Jews, who with their countrymen were carried captive at three different periods into three different parts of the East. Now it is not likely that God would employ heathen-priests, who were daily sacrificing to devils, to communicate any of the glad tidings relative to his son, when he had established a chosen line ever since the days of Abraham, by whom his gracious designs were to be made known. We may therefore consider it as certain, that the records, alluded to by Tacitus, must have been the writings of the Jewish Prophets, which they carried with them when they went into captivity, or wrote while they were there,

and from which the Magi or priests of the country had made extracts.

The above is unquestionably my own opinion, nor do I see how any other person, acquainted with Jewish History, could come to any other conclusion on the subject. I find that Dr. Echard, in his Ecclesiastical History entertains pretty nearly the same opinion as myself; and as he was a man of learning and laborious research, I shall transcribe what he says upon it. “Thus was God pleased,” says he, “to make way for his only son among his peculiar people; but as this great blessing was designed for the benefit of the Gentiles as well as Jews, and for all that should believe in him, so providence was no less careful to make way for him in the Pagan world, and this was effected by divers measures, but more especially by means of several dispersions of the Israelites and Jews.”—“And now it was, that not in Jewry alone was God known, but he, whose name was great in Israel, did make way for the knowledge of himself among all the nations of the earth. In order to this the nation of the Israelites, the great store-house of divine knowledge, which before was an inclosed garden, was now thrown open, and great numbers of the inhabitants transplanted into foreign and remote

countries. And this was done several times by the special hand of providence, but more especially at the times of the three great captivities formerly taken notice of, namely, the Assyrian by Salmanassar in the year 721 before Christ; the Babylonian by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 607, and the Egyptian by Ptolomæus Lagi in the year 320: which captivities occasioned many lesser dispersions of this people, so that in our Saviour's time there were Jews dwelling in all the principal countries of the world, Jews of every nation under Heaven as St. Luke expresses it. Acts c. 2, v. 5. These captivities and dispersions, though they seemed to have been only the just punishment of a corrupted and disobedient nation, yet proved of infinite advantage to the rest of the world, which was excited and enlightened by those people who were not worthy to inhabit their own country. By these the world had the opportunity of looking into the holy scriptures, and of being informed both of the necessity and the nature of a Mediator; and by these great numbers of proselytes were made, especially those called proselytes of the gate, whose principles being so very conformable to the laws of true reason and nature they became the most visible cause, as I hinted before, of the

first propagation of christianity. Partly by means of these dispersed, though generally detested Jews, partly by means of several peculiar revelations to the Gentiles, and partly by the exceeding growth of human learning, not long before our Saviour's birth, the whole world, as well as the inhabitants of Palestine, was awakened into the expectation of the appearance of some extraordinary and wonderful person, who was to be exceedingly beneficial to all mankind." Echard Eccles. Hist. vol 1, p. 35-6.

These three captivities then became the means under providence, of communicating to the people of those countries, (then wholly sunk into idolatry,) into which the Jews were severally carried captive, some knowledge of the true God, and of the Messiah who was to come. The Assyrian, the first of them, was on a very large scale. We are told that all the ten tribes of Israel, men, women and children, were carried away from their country by Salmanassar. These must have amounted altogether to some millions of souls. We are told again that, when they arrived in Assyria, they were not made to live together as one people in a large tract of country allotted to them for this purpose, and away from all communication with their captors, but that

they were distributed among the cities of Assyria, so as to be mixed with the inhabitants of them. Now it is impossible that such an immense number of Jews should not have communicated in the course of time to the people with whom they lived so intermixed, some knowledge of their own history and customs, some knowledge of their religion, some knowledge of the true God and his Messiah, and that they should not also have made as they were always trying to do, a multitude of proselytes of the gate. They would also doubtless take with them into their captivity, their own scriptures, namely, the books of Moses and such of the prophets as had then appeared.

The Babylonish captivity was the next. It appears that Jehoiakin, king of Jerusalem was carried prisoner to Babylon, where he suffered imprisonment for some years, but was at length released, and treated kindly, so kindly indeed, that he was allowed to have a throne, that is to keep a court there. "And the king of Babylon spake kindly to him and set his throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him at Babylon, and he did eat bread continually before the king all the days of his life, and his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the King." 2Kings, c. 25, v. 28, 29, 30. There were

carried also from Jerusalem to Babylon no less than ten thousand of those who were called mighty men and nobles. All the priests, and all the choir or singing men, and all the officers and servants of the temple were consigned to the same city as prisoners of war, and among these some of the prophets. One thousand of what were called craftsmen and smiths were marched thither also. As to the other or remaining population many thousands shared the same fate, but most of the vine-dressers and husbandmen were left in Judæa to be tributary and to cultivate the land. Now from such a choice assemblage of Jews at Babylon we may easily imagine how the Babylonians might have obtained the knowledge that some extraordinary personage was expected to spring from Judæa, as both Tacitus and Suetonius declare to have existed among them before our Saviour came into the world. With respect to the mighty men or nobles just mentioned, it is not difficult to conceive that they might occasionally mix with the princes or nobles of the king of Babylon, as well as with the mighty men and nobles of the courts of other kings who might sojourn in that city, so that in time, the higher orders of the population of Babylon might become pretty well acquainted with the history,



customs, religion and expectations of the Jews. With respect to the craftsmen, smiths and others, who would be intelligent and useful men, would not these have been in request at Babylon? Would they not have been employed by the people there? And would they have said nothing to their employers during a seventy years captivity, about their history and origin, about their great men, such as Abraham, Moses, David and others, their once happy condition as the chosen people of God, their then degraded state in consequence of their disobedience and unbelief, and the prospect of brighter days under their expected Messiah?

But besides the information, which the Jews would thus give the Babylonians of all orders concerning themselves, they would carry with them their sacred books to Babylon. Among these would be the Pentateuch, many thousand copies of which had been made in the reign of Josiah. To this they would add Isaiah and some of the minor prophets which had then come out, and most probably Jeremiah. Now it seems to me impossible that the contents of these books should have been kept secret in such a place as Babylon, during so many as seventy years. Would not the Magi have been, of all people in

the world, the most desirous of seeing them? And would not the Jewish priests, always looking out for proselytes, have been most happy in obliging them; nay would they not have given them copies of their books? And here it must be remembered, that both Ezekiel and Daniel were in Babylon during the captivity, and that the latter wrote his prophecies there; one of which we have seen in the second chapter to have been so particular, that any person, whether Jew or Babylonian, could have calculated the time of the Messiah's coming within a year. These then, that is, the books of the sacred writings just mentioned, were, I presume, the "*antiquæ sacerdotum literæ*" of Tacitus, or ancient manuscripts of certain priests and prophets, from which the report came, which according to Tacitus was so current in the East, that some great personage should come out of Judæa, who should be Lord of the whole Universe.

The next captivity of the Jews was by Ptolemæus Lagi, who took Jerusalem by storm on a Sabbath-day when the inhabitants would not leave their worship to fight, and carried away many thousands of them, and settled them mostly in Egypt. But it will not be necessary to say much concerning this, but only, perhaps that as

the Egyptian took place more than 300 years after the Babylonish captivity, all the books of the Old Testament, or, all the “*antiquæ sacerdotum literæ*” of Tacitus must have been then out \*; and if so, then, as the Jews would take their sacred books with them into captivity in Egypt, the Egyptians could not but have gained from thence the same expectations of an extraordinary person about to appear upon earth at the time predicted, as the Assyrians and Babylonians, and hence the whole east would have imbibed the same notion.

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The Septuagint version of the Old Testament had then appeared and its contents were then consequently laid open to the whole world.

## CHAPTER V.

*On the particular way in which some of the enlightened Romans acquired their knowledge on this subject.—By means of the prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil.—Substance of this prophecy as taken from Virgil.*

I stated in the first chapter, that it was supposed by many enlightened persons at Rome, a few years before Jesus Christ was born, that some great personage was to make his appearance upon earth, who should hold universal dominion, and whose reign should be a reign of righteousness, or a reign in which the guilt of sin should be expiated, and men restored to the innocence and happiness of the golden age. I am now to enquire where these Romans acquired such an extraordinary notion.

I shall answer the enquiry at once by saying, that they gathered it from the Sybilline oracles, or, as these are often called the prophecies of the Cumæan Sybil. These oracles were deposited

in the capitol at Rome as early as in the days of the second Tarquin and placed under the care of two of the nobility of those times ; and here they continued till the time of Marius and Sylla, when the capitol was burnt down and when they perished in the flames. All Rome was in consternation at this event and the senate partaking of this feeling sent ambassadors into Ionia, Lybia, Greece and other countries, namely, to those places where the most ancient temples existed, with a view, if it were possible, of replacing them. [Tacit: Annal: Lib: 6. c. 12.] Also Lactantius, Instit: Divin: Lib. I. c. 6. At length the ambassadors returned, bringing back with them copies of about a thousand verses in all, containing the most ancient oracles. From these, the most learned of the augural college in Rome, selected those which they deemed the most authentic and then deposited them in the temple of the capitol which had been rebuilt. It was from these copies that the enlightened Romans gained their information and formed their notions on this subject.

But it may be said that the fifteen keepers of these Records, who alone were permitted to have access to them, were bound not to divulge their contents ; and it may then be asked, if this

were the case, how could any other persons or any great number of persons have become acquainted with them? To this I may reply by saying that secrets are not always kept, and that in Cicero's time, many people in Rome, beside the Quindecimviri were acquainted with parts of their contents, and particularly with that part of the verses, which related to the coming, about that time, of some extraordinary potentate upon earth, nay, Cicero himself once discussed this part of the verses in the Senate. Among those, who had acquired this knowledge, was the poet Virgil, who was so much pleased and interested with it that he made it the subject of his fourth Eclogue. In this Eclogue, he took the opportunity of paying a compliment to his friend Pollio, who was then consul, for he addressed the poem to him as to the person, during whose consulship the child was to be born, who was to do such glorious things for the world.

Having said thus much by way of introduction, we may now inquire what this prophecy was, that is, what were the particular words in which it was expressed, that we may form our own judgment upon it. But alas, all inquiry here will be to no purpose! for the Sybilline Books having survived three centuries or more

after the reign of Augustus, during which they were eagerly consulted by succeeding emperors, disappeared all at once and were never more heard of. We have therefore no means of knowing what this prophecy contained, but by what Virgil has said of it: and here we must make some allowance for the embellishments of poetry; and also for the introduction of the names of heathen Gods and Goddesses, and again for the popular notions and expressions current in the poet's own time. Thus for example he invokes Lucina, the goddess of child-bearing, to be favourable to the birth of the child then expected, whose reign was to be so beneficial to the human race. Thus again he speaks of the Golden and Iron ages, using them as terms to express the innocence and the happiness of the one and the wickedness and misery of the other of those ages, to which the prophecy alluded. Stripping then the Eclogue of these accompaniments we may fairly conclude, that Virgil has given us the sense and substance of the prophecy in question as far as he understood it. I shall now give in his own words all that he has said upon this part of the subject, premising, that he *tells us that he took his materials from the Cumæan Sybil*, and that I omit the three

first lines merely because they are complimentary only.

“Magnus ab integro Sæclorum nascitur Ordo.  
 “Jam redit et Virgo ; redeunt Saturnia Regna.  
 “Jam nova Progenies Cælo demittitur alto.  
 “Tu modo nascenti Puero, quo ferrea primum  
 “Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,  
 “Casta fave Lucina ; tuus jam regnat Appollo ;  
 “Teque adeo Decus hoc ævi, te consule, inibit,  
 “Pollio : et incipient magni procedere menses.  
 “Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,  
 “Irrita perpetuâ solvent formidine terras.  
 “Ille Deûm vitam accipiet, Divisque videbit  
 “Permixtos Heroas, et ipse videbitur illis,  
 “Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus Orbem.  
     At tibi prima, Puer, nullo munuscula cultu  
 “Errantes hederas passim cum Baccare tellus,  
 “Mixtaque ridente Colocasia fundet Acantho.  
 “Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta Capellæ  
 “Ubera ; nec magnos metuent armenta leones.  
 “Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores,  
 “Occidet et Serpens, et fallax herba veneni  
 “Occidet”—— &c.

As in metrical translations the sense is often obliged to be sacrificed to the verse, I shall give Smart's translation of the above in prose, which is the most literal I can find.

“The great series of ages begins anew ; and now  
 “\* Virgo returns ; the Saturnian reigns return ; now a new

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\* The Constellation Virgo.



“ progeny is sent down from high Heaven. Do thou but,  
 “ chaste Lucina, favour the infant-boy, by whom first *the*  
 “ *Iron Race shall cease, and the Golden Race arise in all*  
 “ *the world.* Now thy Apollo reigns. While thou too,  
 “ Pollio, art Consul, *this so great glory of the age* will  
 “ appear, and the renowned months begin to roll. Under  
 “ thy conduct *whatever vestiges of our guilt remain, they*  
 “ *being done away, shall free the nations from fear for*  
 “ *ever.* *He shall share the life of Gods,* shall see Heroes  
 “ associated with Gods, and himself be seen by them; and  
 “ *he shall rule the peaceful globe with his Father’s*  
 “ *virtues.*

“ And, Boy, the earth will produce to you profusely  
 “ her first little offerings without culture, creeping ivies  
 “ with ladie’s glove, and Egyptian beans mixed with  
 “ smiling holly. The goats of themselves shall bring  
 “ home their udders distended with milk; *nor shall the*  
 “ *herds fear huge lions.* The very cradle shall pour  
 “ thee forth fresh flowers; *and the serpent shall die;*  
 “ and the poisonous plant shall die,” &c.

This then is the substance of the Cumæan Sybil’s prophecy in a very homely dress, as far as the translation goes. We may collect from it, and say, in a few words, that he, of whom it spake as the extraordinary personage who was to come was to have universal sway, and to purge the earth of the guilt of sin, and to be the author of great blessings to mankind. But to say no more than this is to take too little notice of such a prophecy, and I shall therefore quote

what the learned Bishop Horsely says concerning it. “But,” says the Bishop, “what is most worthy of remark, is the description which the Heathen Poet gives of the extraordinary person that he expected; of his origin, of his achievements, and the good consequences of his appearance, which is such, that if any illiterate person who was to hear this poem read in an exact translation with the omission only of the names of heathen deities, and of allusions to profane mythology, which occur in a few passages, any illiterate person who was to hear the poem read with these omissions, which would not affect the general sense of it, if he had not been told before that it was the composition of an heathen author, would without *hesitation* pronounce it to be a prophecy of the Messiah, or a poem at least upon that subject, written in express imitation of the style of the Jewish poets.” The learned Prelate then proceeds to give us his own notion of the substance of it, in the following words. “The object of the Sybilline Oracles, as well as the Messiah of the Jews, was to be of heavenly extraction, the high offspring of the Gods, the great seed of Jupiter. He was to strike an universal peace, and to command the whole world: and in this universal government he was to exercise his

father's virtues. He was to abolish all violence and injustice, to restore the life of man to its original simplicity and innocence, and the condition of man to its original happiness. He was to abolish the causes of violent death; and all death considered as a curse is violent. He was to kill the serpent, and purge the vegetable kingdom of its poisons. The blessings of his reign were to reach even to the brute creation; for the beasts of the forest were to lose their savage nature, that the ox might graze in security within sight of the lion." In fact the child to be born was to come as a deliverer from physical and moral evil. See Horseley's nine sermons. p. 18. 19. 23.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The subject farther considered—this prophecy of divine original—and applicable to Jesus Christ—and to him only—most probably a tradition from the prophecy relative to the “seed of the woman”—very striking similarity between them.*

Dr. Horseley is of opinion that this prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil ( notwithstanding it bears her name ) was of divine original, and that it was strictly applicable to the Messiah. When we consider who the learned prelate was, his vast erudition, the giant strength of his mind, and the time he gave to the study of the holy scriptures, and his laborious researches in order to explain them, his opinion on this as well as on all other scriptural subjects ought to have more than ordinary weight. He speaks thus upon it. “I have now established my fact, that from the

first ages of profane history to the very time of our Saviour's birth, explicit predictions of him *were extant in the Gentile world, in books which were holden in religious veneration, and which were deposited in their Temples.* The matter of these prophecies, and the agreement of the imagery of their language with what we find in the prophecies of holy writ, is *I think a sufficient argument of their divine original.* Observe, I affirm not in general of the Sybilline books that they were divine; much less do I affirm that the Sybils were women who had the gift of prophecy. I believe that they were fabulous personages, to whom the ignorant heathens ascribed the most ancient of their sacred books, when the true original of them was forgotten. But the existence of these imaginary prophetesses, and the authority of the writings ascribed to them, are distinct questions. Whether these books contained *prophecies of Christ* is a *question of fact in which the affirmative is supported by the highest historical evidence.* That these prophecies, wherever they might be found, *could be of no other than divine original,* the matter and the style of them is in my judgment an irrefragable argument."

Upon the above quotation I have now to ob-

serve, that I fully coincide with the learned prelate in his opinion that the prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil, of which we have given a translation as it stands in Virgil, was of divine original, and also that it was strictly applicable to the Messiah. But I may go farther and say that it was applicable not only to no other person who appeared in the world about the time when the Messiah was born, but that it was applicable to no other person that ever trod upon our earth. The only person living at that time, to whom this prophecy could have applied with any thing like a seeming propriety, was Augustus; but, did it fit him? No. There was one part however of the prediction which was verified in his reign, but this only for a time. The Temple of Janus was shut three times, which had not been the case for seven hundred years before, and when it was last shut, the Romans *were at peace with all the world*. It must also be acknowledged that Augustus was himself an amiable man in the latter part of his life, and the patron of learned men; but this had nothing to do with morals, except that we may indulge a hope, that learning has a tendency to remove prejudices, to give men a more correct notion of things, and to make them mix more agreeably

and harmoniously in society with each other. But he was not, in the sense of this prophecy, the beginner of a reign of righteousness, or “the great deliverer from moral evil.” He did not remove “what remained of the vestiges of guilt,” and thus “free the nations from fear for ever;” nor did he do away any of the national vicious customs of his own times, as a first step to restore them to their former simplicity and innocence as in the golden age. He never took away one idol from the temples as preparatory to the worship of the true God. He allowed the bloody games, the gladiatorial and other cruel and wicked shows, to continue in crowded Amphitheatres for the sport of the Roman people. Nor did he endeavour by a new, I mean purer system of education to do away the prejudices of the rising generation, and thus to prepare them for the happier age, which had been predicted.

I shall now say a few words in addition to what Bishop Horsey has just said relative to this prophecy, as having been of divine original. And first, let me ask this question, where did the Cumæan Sybil get it? Or rather, did she fabricate it herself? This is impossible, for it contained such an exact description of the Messiah, and of the glorious character and consequences

of his reign, between five and six hundred years before he came, that no one but God himself, or one who had been divinely inspired, could have uttered it. But perhaps some one may say, the Sybil herself might have been inspired. This would have been contrary to what we know to have been God's usual proceeding in such cases. He never employed heathens, as Dr. Horseley contends in another place, or men in the habit of sacrificing to devils, to unfold his gracious designs beforehand to his creatures. But if the Cumæan Sybil was not herself an inspired person, and yet the prophecy was of divine original, what was it, and from whence did it come? There can be no doubt, I think, that it must have been a prophecy which had come down to the patriarchs by tradition, many hundred years before the Sybil was born, and which had been preserved by their descendants by the same means (tradition either oral or written\*) till her time, when by some means or other it fell into her hands. And now, having stated thus much, I have only one other question to propose; do

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\* Writing in some shape or other was known in the time of Job. "Oh, that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever!"



we know of any prophecy, which must have come down to the patriarchs, to which this of the Cumæan Sybil can be likened? I think there is one, namely, that which relates to “the seed of the woman” when the serpent was cursed; and which was the first prophecy that God ever delivered to man; and I think the similarity so great, that every reader will be struck with it, when a fair comparison is made between them. I shall therefore now put down what it has occurred to me to say on this subject.

We gather from the prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil, as it has been handed down to us by Virgil, that there was a time in the beginning of things, when men lived in a state of innocence and happiness, and this time was distinguished by men of after ages by the name of the golden age. We gather from it again, that after this, crime and violence found their way into the world and disordered it; and that this new age, so different from the former, was called the iron age. The prophecy goes on to state that a child should come into the world at a future day, who should have universal sway, the effect of which would be the doing away of all the vestiges of the guilt of sin, and the restoration of men to the state or condition, which they had enjoyed in the primitive or golden times.

We come now to the prophecy of God. We gather from Moses, that there was a time in the beginning of things, when God created Adam, and that he made him in his own image, which was that of holiness, and that he put him in a garden in which to live, and that he lived there in innocence and happiness. We gather from Moses again, that in a course of time Adam fell from his first estate, and that he introduced sin and all its attendant evils into the world, having been led astray by the seducing words of his wife, as she had been before, by the enticing words of Satan, in the form of a serpent. The prediction then stated that a child should be born into the world at some future time, from the seed of the woman, who had been thus deceived, who should bruise the head of this serpent, that is, destroy the power of Satan, and thus deliver men from the guilt of sin, and restore them to the condition, which Adam had once enjoyed in Paradise. These then are the two prophecies, and wherein do they differ in substance? It is true indeed that the serpent is not mentioned in the Sybilline (as in the other) prophecy as an agent in the destruction of the happiness of man, but only as a common reptile of the field. How this difference arose I cannot say, I cannot tell

for example how much the original prophecy might have been misconceived, or how much it might have gained or lost in words or meaning by passing from mouth to mouth through so many generations till it came into the hands of the Cumæan Sybil. One thing however is very remarkable and ought not to be forgotten, namely, that in both cases the serpent was to be destroyed.

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#### CHAPTER VII.

*The subject further considered—conjectures as to the way in which this prophecy was preserved—and how it found its way to the Cumæan Sybil and the Capitol at Rome.*

Let us suppose then that it is true that the prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil was a tradition from the prophecy of God, when he cursed the serpent, a new question arises, namely, how or where did this Sybil obtain it, and how did it

find its way into the temple of the Capitol at Rome?

It would be of some importance in the consideration of this subject if we could know, how this prophecy was understood by Adam and the first men and their children; but Moses has given us no information on this head, and we must make therefore our own conjectures upon it. My own conjecture is this. In the first place Adam would know, and this indeed to his sorrow, that he had broken the command of God, and that he had therefore sinned, and brought sin into the world, and that for this conduct he had been turned out of Paradise and degraded, and that he was then living under the sentence which God had pronounced against him for his disobedience. He would know also that this prophecy related to himself and to Eve and to their posterity, and to the deceiver also. He would know moreover that there would be constant enmity between the deceiver and the seed of the woman, and that in the conflicts which would arise between them the woman's seed would have the advantage (for the deceiver, being condemned from this time to creep on his belly on the ground, could only bite the heel of his adversary, while his adversary from his erect

posture and the position of his arms could bruise the head of the deceiver) and that ultimately the seed of the woman would triumph. But Adam could not know the contents of other prophecies, that is, of those which inspired men did not deliver till many hundred years after his death. He could not know for instance that when God, in cursing the serpent, confined himself to the seed of the woman saying nothing of the seed of the man, he meant the seed of one of Eve's descendants who should be a pure virgin. The prophecy however must have been very consoling, as far as it was understood, both to Adam and Eve in their very forlorn condition; for they would collect from it undoubtedly something like a deliverance of themselves or their descendants from the curse at some future time, that is from the power of him, who had been the cause of their ruin; and so far it would afford them a ground of hope; but they would be much in the dark about the particular application of the prophecy *as to which of their posterity would be first delivered*, and also *as to the time when the deliverance would take place*; and this darkness would keep them anxiously attentive to every event, which might seem to be connected with the completion of it.

This was, I should suppose, pretty much the state of Adam's mind on contemplating the prophecy in question; and if so, we may be sure that he would take the greatest possible care that it should be preserved by his children and childrens' children, all of whom it so much concerned. It would therefore be carefully preserved, as far as means could be devised to perpetuate it, by the members of the church of Adam. It would be carried by Noah over the waters of the flood, and he would communicate it to his children in the most impressive manner with a view that they should do their best to preserve it also. He would place it no doubt among the records of his own church, and have it committed to memory and frequently repeated, as there could be no other means in those early times of preserving it. It could not fail therefore of being known to all the families of the world when living in the plain of Shinar. But if it were known to these, and if moreover it were held in veneration by them, they would carry it with them when they separated from each other at the time of what is usually called the dispersion; for the same motives, which had induced them to endeavour to keep it in remembrance thus far, would continue to influence them. Hence in process

of time, when each family had so increased in numbers as to have become a tribe or petty nation, we should probably find this prophecy in the custody of the memories of their respective priests; for this was the way in which sacred and other important records were preserved among nations, where letters had not been introduced. Nor is it any objection to this that these families went off afterwards into Idolatry; for idolatrous nations had their priests as well as those, which worshipped the true God, and the duty of perpetuating the national traditions would continue to be confided to these. The priests then of the different tribes would carry this prophecy with them on the tablets of their memory wherever their tribes migrated. When they learnt the use of letters they would commit them to writing; and afterwards when they became settled and built cities and temples, they would deposit their written records in the latter. Hence the same prophecy might be found in different temples in very different and distant parts of the world, according as the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japhet had brought it thither in their wanderings from Shinar. And that the heathen temples were the depositaries of patriarchal traditions is well known.

I had occasion to state in the last chapter what Dr. Horseley has said on this subject, “that from the first ages of profane history to the very time of our Saviour’s birth, explicit predictions of him were extant in the Gentile world, in books which were ever holden in religious veneration, and which were *deposited in their temples.*” The learned Jacob Bryant, in his masterly work called “a system of Ancient Mythology” confirms this over and over again. He gives us also some curious particulars of some of these temples. He tells us, on the authority of Abydenus and Berosas, “that there had been delineated in some ancient temple an hieroglyphical description of the Creation, as well as of the destruction of mankind by a deluge. Such descriptions were either painted upon the walls, or engraved on obelisks and sacred pillars.” Mythol. v. 3. p. 131. Mr. Bryant gives us also an account of a tradition found by some Grecian in an Egyptian temple of great antiquity, and which the Greek preserved by translating it into his own language. He then gives us this record or tradition, as it came to him, in its Greek dress, but translates it for the benefit of his readers. The part of it which I now mean to copy, runs thus.



"But when the judgments of the Almighty God  
 "Were ripe for execution; when the Tower  
 "Rose to the skies upon Assyria's plain,  
 "And all mankind one language only knew;  
 "A dread commission from on high was given  
 "To the fell whirlwinds, which with dire alarm  
 "Beat on the Tower, and to its lowest base  
 "Shook it convulsed. And now all intercourse,  
 "By some occult and over-ruling power,  
 "Ceas'd among men: by utterance they strove  
 "Perplexed and anxious to disclose their mind;  
 "But their lips failed them; and in lieu of words  
 "Produc'd a painful bubbling sound: the place  
 "Was hence called Babel; by th' Apostate crew  
 "Nam'd from th'event. Then sever'd far away  
 "They sped uncertain into realms unknown;  
 "Thus kingdoms rose and the glad world was filled."

*Mythology. vol. 4. p. 100.*

From this tradition, which gives an interesting account of the building of Babel, and the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of mankind having been found in an ancient Egyptian temple, and from the preceding tradition relative to the creation and destruction of mankind by a deluge, having been found on the walls of another of the most ancient temples, we shall not be at a loss to conjecture where the patriarchal records were usually deposited. But to put the matter out of all doubt I shall bring to the re-

collection of the reader a fact which I stated but a little while ago. It happened, as I then said, that the Capitol at Rome was burnt, and that the Sybilline prophecies, which had been kept there, perished in the flames, and that the Roman Senate sent ambassadors to different parts of the world to endeavour to replace them. Now where did these ambassadors go with the hope of finding copies of them? None knew better than heathens where heathen traditions were to be found at that time. The ambassadors therefore, we find, directed their course to those countries, where the most ancient temples then existed, and there they found what they wanted. This affords a proof, that the ancient temples were the depositories of the ancient patriarchal traditions, and also of the truth of a remark, which I made only a few lines back, and which was this, that if my conjectures were true relative to the Sybilline prophecy, the same prophecy might be found in different temples in very different and distant parts of the world according as the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, had brought it thither in their wanderings from Shinar.

Having said thus much, and having travelled thus far I believe on safe ground, I may now

give something like an answer to the question which has been proposed, “where did the Cumæan Sybil get the prophecy which bears her name? That she was not an inspired woman, and therefore that the prophecy was not her own we have already shown. And it might be shown, that it was not possible for her to have got it from the books of Moses, or the other scriptures, in her time. She could therefore have only come to the knowledge of it from some of those patriarchal traditions, which had found their way into some of the heathen temples. And this conjecture will receive additional strength from a new consideration, I mean that of the station, which she is said to have filled during the latter part of her life; for she was indisputably *one of the Sybilline priestesses*, and it was the office of these to take *care of the memorials which were deposited in the temples, over which they respectively presided*. But if this were the case all the records in that particular temple, to which she belonged, would be open to her inspection every day; and she could not but know the contents of all of them. She might indeed have taken copies of them if she pleased. In this way it was I presume that she became possessed of the prophecy in question. The particular tem-

ple, however, over which she presided is no where mentioned that I know of; but it is probable that it was in some part of Asia; for though historians are divided as to the particular place of her birth, most of them agree in saying that she was born on that continent. And now for two or three historical disclosures, which will throw light upon a very important part of the subject, namely, how this prophecy found its way to Rome at the early period which has been mentioned. The first is, that this same Sybil left her abode in Asia, wherever it was, and went afterwards into Italy. The second is, that when she was in Italy she resided in a sacred cavern near Cumæ in Campania, from which circumstance she was called the Cumæan, to distinguish her from the other Sybils, rather than from Cumæ in Æolia, where it would be against a preponderance of evidence to say that she was born. The third is, that an old woman supposed to be the same woman, offered this very prophecy with other oracles to Tarquin the Second. She went to the king himself, as Dionysius tells the story, with nine books of oracles, for which she demanded three hundred pieces of gold. Tarquin refused to give her that price. She then burnt three of the nine, and offered him the remaining six at

the same rate. This being again rejected by the king, who thought the woman mad, she burnt three more of these books, still however requiring the same sum as at first. Tarquin, moved at this strange procedure, consulted the Augurs, who, when their divinations were performed, acquainted him with the impiety of which he had been guilty by refusing a treasure sent him from heaven, and commanded him to give whatever the Sybil might ask. After this the king purchased them, and lodged them in the temple of the first Capitol, as before stated. This then, is the way, according to Dionysius Halycarnasseus, a most respectable author, in which the Sybilline books were introduced into Rome; nor does the circumstance of the bargain between the king and the woman throw any discredit on the account; for there can be no doubt that both priest and priestesses of these temples frequently made a trade of their office by selling copies of traditions or other sorts of records in their possession, nay even that they went farther by forging others; though, in the present case forgery is out of the question, because the prophecy, which we have now had so long under our consideration, carries with it its own testimony that it was of divine original.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Whether Jesus Christ, after having been upon our earth, fully answered the character, which had been given him by the different prophecies before mentioned.*

A question, and a very important one, now comes before us for solution, which is, whether Jesus Christ after he came upon our earth, fulfilled the meaning of the different prophecies, which we have shewn to have been in circulation in different parts of the world concerning the great personage, who was to come. We have already shown, that they were not applicable to Augustus Cæsar, nor to any other person of his time. To solve this I shall feel it right to go over these prophecies again in a very concise manner, and to try to reduce the substance of all of them to a few words, and then to make these few words the standard, by which the case may be properly tried and decided.

It has already appeared, that the worldly-minded among the Jews, of whom by far the greater part of that nation consisted, were of opinion that their Messiah was to come in the character of a conqueror, that is, a military conqueror, or of a military deliverer or a restorer by force of arms, of that which had been lost. But certain events, which occurred after his crucifixion and death, prove beyond the power of contradiction, that they had taken an entirely false view of his character ; for, in the first place, Jesus Christ never took up arms on any occasion ; nor did he deliver his countrymen from the Roman yoke ; nor did he restore the throne of David to its ancient splendour. So far was this from being the case, that the Romans under Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem and the temple itself in so complete a manner, that one stone was not left upon another ; and when they took the city again, many years afterwards when it had been rebuilt, they not only led away captive all the inhabitants, who had survived the siege, but all the inhabitants of Judæa, men, women and children, and transported them to other countries, so that from this time they were broken as a nation, and they have been fugitives ever since in different parts of the earth. It is

clear then that all the Jewish prophecies concerning the Messiah or him who was to come, *are to be taken in a spiritual sense*. Thus, if he was to come as a conqueror, he was to be a conqueror over Satan, if as a deliverer, then he was to come as a deliverer from moral evil, and if as a restorer, then he was to be the restorer of the image of God in man which had been lost. With respect to the Samaritans, it has appeared that they took an entirely correct view of the subject. Their Messiah was to come upon earth as a teacher or preacher of divine things, and as a deliverer from the bondage of sin, and as the Saviour of the world. With respect to the people of the east, their opinion was, that a person was to spring from Judæa, who should govern the whole world. This worldly notion they gathered from the Jews, or they gave this worldly interpretation to texts in some of the Jewish prophecies, which, during the Babylonish captivity, might have fallen into their hands; but we have already proved that such an interpretation was false, historical facts standing up against it. With respect so the Romans, I believe that their vanity led them to consider the Sybilline prophecy in a worldly sense, and even to apply it to themselves. They thought no



doubt that a child should be born among themselves, who should hold universal dominion. But the Sybilline prophecy says no such thing in a worldly sense. It states this dominion to be wholly spiritual. The power of sin and guilt were to be done away, and men were to be restored to that innocence and happiness which were the characteristics of the golden age. And now having gone over these prophecies again in a concise manner we may ask, what is the substance or meaning of all of them in a few words when put together and taken in a spiritual sense? I think that a few words extracted from a single verse of Daniel's prophecy (c. 9. v. 24.) would contain and fit them all. The Messiah according to Daniel was to come, "To put an end to sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." These words will include the ideas of a conqueror, deliverer, and restorer as just explained, as well as the ideas of a teacher, a preacher, and a Saviour, all of which epithets or characters have been found in the different prophecies which have been cited as applicable to the great personage who was to come. I shall take them therefore as the standard to which I shall principally refer in endeavouring to solve the present question.

And first I may observe that Jesus Christ began his reign as *a teacher or preacher of righteousness*. The very first words in his first discourse to the people who flocked about him were characteristic of the object of his coming. “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” that is, (as the Greek word for “Repent,” properly means,) “be truly sorry for your past sins and become new creatures, for the new kingdom or dispensation, of which your prophets have fore-warned you, is now at your doors.” And what did he labour to effect? I answer *to put an end to sin* in every possible way, both in thought, word, and deed, and *to cultivate universal righteousness*. Again, his life was entirely consistent with his doctrines; he was spotless as to sin, and in the habitual exercise of every virtue. Again, *he gave up his life as a sacrifice or propitiation for the sins of the world*. Thus, in all respects, as far as his own person was concerned, he came up to the standard which has just been laid down. But I must follow him a little further. It was necessary that the kingdom which he had begun, should be kept up, and enlarged, so that all might partake of its benefits. For this purpose, he chose \*Twelve Apostles, and commanded

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\* When Judas had destroyed himself, Matthias was chosen to fill his place, after this Paul was added to their number.

these to go into all the world, and preach his gospel to every creature, promising them at the same time his holy spirit to cheer, and comfort, and assist them in their labours.

Let us now go to the Apostles and see what these did towards extending and perpetuating the kingdom of their Lord and Master. It appears that for about twelve years after his ascension they confined themselves pretty much, in the discharge of their duties, to Jerusalem and Palestine, (see Echard's Eccles. History, vol. 1. p. 272.) but that at length after the vision of Peter (Acts. c. 11 and c. 12) they resolved upon carrying into execution his great commission whereby they were to spread themselves as teachers in the different parts of the earth, as far as it was known to be then peopled. It is generally affirmed by the ancients, that they agreed among themselves what part of the world each should take. According to this division Peter went into Pontus, Galatia and those other provinces of the lesser Asia, at first confining his labours to the Jews in those parts. Andrew had those vast northern countries of Scythia and Sogdiana committed to his portion; though afterwards he is supposed to have returned towards Greece, and to have founded the bishopric of Byzantium.

John's portion was partly the same with Peter's, namely, the lesser Asia. Philip had the upper Asia appointed him with some parts of Scythia and Colchis. The hither India, commonly called Arabia Felix, was allotted to Bartholomew, into which parts he carried the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew himself preached the Gospel in the Asiatic Ethiopia by Chaldæa, Persia, and Parthia; but Parthia was more particularly allotted to Thomas, who also preached to the Hyreanians Bactrians and Indians. James the less, being Bishop of Jerusalem, continued principally in that city with so much amiable goodness and discretion, that his greatest enemies had a veneration for him. Simon (Zelotes) had for his portion Egypt, Cyrene, Lybia, and Mauritania. Jude had Syria and Mesopotamia, and Matthias Cappadocia and the remainder of Colchis. This is the best account I am able to give of the disposal of the Apostles for the accomplishment of their great work in the different parts of the world. That it is accurate no man living can say; but that it is not very far from the truth may be inferred from this circumstance; that there is respectable historical evidence to show that some of the Apostles did actually preach the gospel in the countries which we have here allotted to them. Thus for

example we have just said that Peter went into Pontus, Galatia, and those other provinces of the lesser Asia. Now we know from his epistle to “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Asia, Cappadocia and Bithynia” that he preached and made many converts there. We have just said again, that a part of Parthia was allotted to Thomas who also preached to the Hyrcanians, Bactrians and Indians. Now we find “that this Apostle, according to the tradition of the Church in Origen’s days, preached in Parthia, which contained all Persia; and some have given us a catalogue of the several people in that kingdom to whom he preached, namely, the Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcanians and Bactrians. St. Chrysoston also says of this Apostle, that being encouraged by a divine vision, he travelled forward into the Indies to Maliapur and the country of the Braehmans, where after many travels and labours he converted Segamo the prince of the country with many others.” Echard Eccles. History, vol. 2. p. 395. We have just said again, that the hither India, commonly called Arabia Felix, was allotted to Bartholomew. Now we find that shortly after Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, had entered upon his spiritual office in the reign of Commodus,

some ambassadors from the hither India desired him to send along with them some worthy and excellent person to preach the Christian Faith in those countries. The Bishop appointed Pantænus, a very able and pious man, who notwithstanding all the apparent hardships and difficulties joyfully undertook the mission. In this journey we are informed, that he met with several of the Indians, who retained the knowledge of Christ preached to them long since by the Apostle Bartholomew; whereof not the least evidence was his finding St. Matthew's Gospel written in Hebrew, which Bartholomew had left behind him, and which, St. Jerome says, Pantænus afterwards brought back with him to Alexandria. Echard. Eccles. History v. 2. p. 524.

We may now proceed with the solution of the question. It has already appeared that Jesus Christ, as far as his own person was concerned, answered all that all the prophecies concentrated had said concerning him. It remains therefore now to see, what the Apostles did in their turn to perpetuate and extend his kingdom, or rather what were the effects of their preaching upon those who heard them. Did it dispel prejudices? Did it overcome superstition? Did it make a change in men's lives and conduct?

Did it beget new principles in the heart, which had a tendency “to put an end to sin and to bring in everlasting righteousness?” The first remarkable circumstance which occurred after our Saviour’s ascension (for it was not till then that his reign or kingdom begun) was on the day of Pentecost, when the spirit of God was poured out and given in such a surprising manner. This was followed by another circumstance equally remarkable, namely, that the Apostles by means of their preaching added three thousand converts to the church in one day; that is, the different Apostles preached in different parts of the city of Jerusalem in one day, and this extraordinary number of converts was the result of their preaching. Now this is a case in point, and the first of the sort that occurred in the new dispensation or kingdom. Three thousand persons altered their views, and parted from their prejudices on this one occasion. But the account which follows renders this part still more interesting. It is said of them, (these converts,) “and they continued stedfastly in the Apostle’s doctrines and fellowship;” Acts. c. 2. v. 42; that is, they were no hypocrites. They did not go back from their professions. They did not even waver. They clung to the doctrines

which the Apostle's had taught them and which these had received from Christ himself; and they kept up a communion with the Apostles and with each other for their own religious improvement.

But it may be said that the persons just mentioned were principally, if not wholly, Jews, men, who had a knowledge of God before, and whose lives were decent and respectable when compared with those of the Gentiles, and that these Gentiles were the people to whom we ought rather to have directed our attention. It may be said also that it would have been more to the point to inquire what was the effect of the preaching of the Apostles upon men who were Idolaters, and whose lives were stained by all the vices that the infirmities of human nature could produce. This is certainly true; and we shall therefore confine ourselves for the future as far as we can, to the case of the Gentiles. And here the first thing which strikes us is an account which Peter gives of his flock, who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. These must have been, taking them all together, considerable in point of number, and moreover most of them Idolaters or Heathens. Now Peter tells us, what



were some of the vices of the heathen-world, (I mean, of the common vices) or of the way in which they who had been converted by him in these parts, had been living. In a letter which he addressed to them as their Pastor we find that "in times past" they had "wrought the will of the Gentiles," 1. Peter. c. 4. v. 3-4. that they had walked in lasciviousness;" (lewdness and impurity) in lusts; (the indulgence of strong irregular passions and desires of various sorts) in "excess of wine; in revellings; (lascivious feasting, with drunken songs) banquetings (feasts where both eating and drinking were carried to excess, accompanied by many disorders) and abominable idolatries;" (the abominations practiced at their idol feasts, where they not only worshipped the idol, but did so with the most obscene and abominable rites.) This was indeed the general state of the heathen-world; and with this monstrous wickedness christianity had every where to contend. But the Apostle tells his flock, that they were not then implicated in these charges, for that they had forsaken their evil ways, and this to the astonishment of those who remained among them unconverted, who could not conceive how it could happen that they should have given up

so many gratifications. "Wherein, they think it strange," says the Apostle "that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot." But if these once idolatrous people had changed their course of life, what must have been their character when the Apostle addressed his first letter to them. They must have become pure in their thoughts, chaste in their conversation and conduct, sober and abstemious. They must have brought their passions under subjugation. They must have broken off evil habits. They must have forsaken bad company. They must have been the very opposite of what they once were. They must have formed within the circle of their own society an entirely new world. What a wonderful and glorious change was this ; inasmuch as men, who had been brought up from their infancy in the grossest and most abominable vices, threw aside, difficult as the struggle must have been, all their wicked practices, and gave a proof of a renewed heart by walking afterwards in holiness of life !

In the same manner as the principles of Christ's new kingdom, namely, the kingdom of righteousness, triumphed over the vicious prejudices and passions of the converts made by his Apostle Peter in the lesser Asia, so they triumphed over

the vicious prejudices and passions of the converts made by his Apostle Paul at Corinth. "Know ye not" says St. Paul to the latter (1 Cor. c. 6. v. 9, 10, 11,) "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves nor covetous, nor drunkards nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you." Here is a catalogue of the crimes in which the Corinthians had lived when they were heathens, but mark the change which followed the Apostle's preaching. "But now," adds he, "ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."

In looking over the Acts of the Apostles we find that a circumstance occurred while St. Paul was at Ephesus, which, though apparently trivial and generally but little noticed, is yet of great importance in the case before us. The Apostle, it appears, had resided for a considerable time in that city, during which he had preached often and performed many miracles, so that great numbers were converted by him. Now it happened that among those, who believed, there was a cer-

tain description of people who gained their living by practising the magic arts. It is said of these, "many also of them, which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." Acts c. 19. v. 19, 20. This transaction was very honourable to the magicians, for the burning of their books publicly, probably in the public market-place, was neither more nor less than a public confession of their guilt, or that they had been knowingly imposing upon the credulity of their fellow-men for gain. Indeed it could only have arisen from a deep conviction that their practices were contrary to the spirit of the doctrine which they had learned from the Apostle Paul. I say a deep conviction, first, because by burning their books they must have made a great pecuniary sacrifice, and secondly, because no other reason can be assigned why they destroyed them, than that the fraudulent arts and processes contained in them should be no longer learnt and perpetuated. Here then was a triumph of the principles of the new kingdom over delusion and the powers of darkness. These arts had originally sprung from idolatry, having been prac-

tised in the time of Moses among those nations, Egyptian, Canaanitish and other nations which had left the true God; and having been kept up both by the priests and the people under the notion of demoniacal interference, they had a tendency to keep the mind in a superstitious bondage, and thus hinder it from moral improvement.

After this an event took place, which made a noise throughout the whole world. The great oracle at Delphi became silent. It refused to give its answers any longer to those, who sought its advice. There were several other oracles in different parts of the world; but this at Delphi was of the greatest antiquity and renown. The greatest kings and potentates consulted it. The greatest philosophers visited it for the like purpose, private families flocked to it also for its counsel. People went to it from all parts, all anxious to know the future, and no distance deterred them. By means of these consultations they who belonged to it had amassed prodigious wealth, and yet none were made wiser by the answers it gave. Many on the other hand had reason to wish that they had never submitted their affairs to its judgment; for it gave such equivocal answers, that no one could understand them, and yet every one was desirous of turning

their ambiguity in his own favour. But this was not the worst part of the story, for when men found that they had been deceived, they could not blame the oracle, because the answer which it gave, had a double meaning. This institution then, which had deluded mankind for so many ages at length expired, and at about the time I have mentioned, that is after the Apostles had begun to preach in different parts of the world, and not before. Indeed the date of the downfall of this oracle may be fixed within a few years; for the first writer who mentions it, was the poet Lucan. He laments it in his “Pharsalia” as one of the greatest misfortunes *of that age*, the age in which he lived, that the Delphic oracle which he represents as one of the choicest gifts of the Gods, was become silent.

“ ————— non ullo sæcula dono

“ Nostra carent majore Deûm, quam Delphica Sedes

“ Quod sileat ————— ”

Now Lucan was born about the year 39 ~~b. c.~~ ~~Christ~~, and died about the year 65 of the Christian Æra, aged only 27. How this Institution came to be broken up is no where mentioned either by the Greek or Roman writers. It has been often said that this oracle ceased to speak

when Jesus began to preach, as if his preaching had miraculously silenced it. But this is not correct if the preceding statement be true; nor do we want any miracle to account for its downfall, except the miraculous effect which the doctrines of the Apostles always had upon the minds of those who embraced them heartily. If the people of Ephesus had been so impressed by these doctrines as to believe the magical arts practised there to have been a delusion, I do not see why the people of Phocis, where the oracle was, and the country round about it, should not have been impressed by the same doctrines (if the same had been preached to them) so as to believe that the oracle at Delphi was a delusion also. Certain it is that no christian convert could have consulted this oracle after his conversion, any more than he could have joined in a sacrifice to the Heathen Gods. Every man so converted would have looked upon all those, who had any concern in the management of it as Dæmons, or as men impiously putting themselves in the place of God, who alone had a knowledge of the future. And here I cannot help observing, that Paul had established a large church of christian converts at Corinth, and another at Phillippi, and a third at Thessalo-

nica, before the oracle had ceased. Now Phocis was situated in the middle of a large tract of country between the three, though at a considerable distance from each. Here then would be many thousands of persons of the most amiable lives, who not only would have no communication with this oracle but who would hold it, and induce others to hold it, in abhorrence; and my own opinion is, that, whenever it ceased to speak, it did not so cease on account of any miracle for the purpose but because the opinions of these three great bodies of christians which surrounded Phocis having become known, namely, that the answers of the oracle could only have been delusion, the people in these parts refused any longer to consult it; and these consultations would be less and less frequent not only in these parts but every where else, as christianity made its way in the world.

We have now to mention two or three other great events, which were the effects of the preaching of the Apostles and their successors; but these did not take place till christianity had attained a greater growth. It was not indeed to be expected either that the Apostles or their successors should be able to blow away the long-rooted prejudices and superstitions of ages at a



single breath. Ignorance was to be first done away; then knowledge to be put in its place; and then time allowed for conviction to follow. It was sufficient that the gospel had been spread beyond all expectation, and that, wherever it had been spread, it had led to the dereliction of vicious habits and to the pursuit of a virtuous course of life. In the first hundred years of the christian *Æra* it had been spread through the greatest part of Europe, Asia, and Africa, extending from the British Isles to the farthest Indies; nor was it confined to cities and the most populous places; it was seen in the towns and in the country villages also. Pliny, who was governor of Pontus, Bithynia and other parts of Asia Minor was obliged to write to the Emperor Trajan concerning those christians, who were then living within his own government, in answer to an Imperial Edict. In this letter he confirms the account which has been just given in all its parts, as far as his knowledge of Asia Minor was concerned. He tells the Emperor, that the christians there were very numerous. They were of all ranks ages and sexes. The contagion of their superstition had overspread not only cities, but towns and country villages, but he thought that he might be able to cure it.

They had done mischief to the Pagan religion, inasmuch as the temples of the Gods had begun to be deserted, and the sale of victims for the sacrifices to be diminished, but he hoped to put a stop to these evils. He had executed those who had been brought before him on the charge of being christians, whenever they had confessed themselves to have been of that persuasion. The whole sum and substance however of the accusation against these people lay in this, that they were wont upon a set solemn day to meet together before sun-rise, and to sing among themselves a Hymn to Christ, as a God; and oblige themselves by an oath not to commit any wickedness, but to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, to keep faith, and to restore any pledge entrusted to them. After this they retired, and met again at a common meal, at which there was nothing extraordinary or criminal.

Such was the state of things at the end of the first century. I shall now pass, as quickly as I can, to the end of the second, and then to the end of the third, that I may introduce in their proper places those other great events, to which I have alluded as so many other effects of the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, or of the doctrines of the new kingdom. Dr.

Echard in his Ecclesiastical history winds up the second century in the following words, Vol. 2. p. 539, "The christian religion," says he, "had now diffused itself through all the known parts of the world; but more fully and triumphantly in the vast Roman Empire, where it was most violently opposed and met with the most terrible conflicts. Christians were now in the cities, towns, and villages, in the camp, in the senate, in the palace and in all places, except the Pagan temples and theatres, and that in such numbers and multitudes that Tertullian assures us, that if they had unanimously retired to any other country the Empire would have become a mere desert and solitude."

The same writer describes the state of the Christian Church at the end of the third century or at the beginning of the fourth in an equally concise manner. "We are now arrived," says he, (vol. 2. p. 661.) "at the fourth century of the Christian Church, the beginning of which was attended with the most terrible storm and conflicts that ever were known, and with no less glorious conquest and triumph; so that Christianity first vanquished all human powers, and then obliged them to be real protectors. But before this noble advantage God thought fit to permit

such a furious wind as should purge all the rubbish from his Church and winnow all its chaff. The Christians, with some inconsiderable interruptions, had now enjoyed forty years peace and prosperity, from the end of the Valerian persecution; in which space they increased to an extraordinary degree, filled the imperial palaces, and obtained the best offices in the state; so that, as Eusebius observes, it is impossible to describe the vast assemblies, the numerous congregations, and the multitudes that thronged in every city to embrace the faith of Christ; for which reason they were no longer satisfied with the old edifices, but erected spacious churches from the very foundations, throughout all the cities in the empire."

I have now brought the reader to the place to which I have been for some time aiming to carry him. I have now prepared him for those other great events, which followed the silencing of the heathen oracles, and which the preaching of the gospel by the Apostles and their successors alone produced. It will be seen by what has been just said, that the Christians at the end of the third century were spread over all the parts of the Roman Empire in such numbers, that they formed a very considerable portion, of

the inhabitants of the known world. I mean by this to say, that the Christians must have had at this particular time, in consequence of their great numbers and the integrity and usefulness of their lives, a great share in the formation of public opinion on many subjects. Now it is well known, that from the very beginning of their association as a religious body they had, up to the time we are now speaking of, separated themselves in a manner from the world, and that they had discarded all those opinions and practices of the world, which they believed to be either in themselves or in their effects contrary to the will of God.

Among the customs then in fashion they had condemned that of going to the theatres, the reasons for which may be seen in Tertullian and the early christian writers; but above all they viewed with the deepest pain, mourning and horror, some of those spectacles which gave the greatest pleasure to the Roman people. These were those cruel and bloody games, where poor prisoners of war were exposed in crowded amphitheatres to fight with wild beasts till one or the other was destroyed, and this solely for the amusement of those who attended them; nor did they view with less horror those other tragical games.

where people of the same description were made to fight for the same purpose, till one of them killed the other, unless perchance one of the combatants, feeling himself sure of being vanquished, appealed to the mercy of the spectators, when these turned their thumbs either to the right or the left, as a signal either to save him or despatch him according as he had afforded them sport. Now the Christians considered the destruction of life at these games as neither more nor less than the most deliberate and wanton murder and that every person, who was voluntarily a spectator of it, was a sharer in the crime. They considered also that the tendency and effect of the games themselves upon the minds of the spectators was to engender and keep up a ferocious disposition, which unfitted them for the performance of those tender duties which Christianity enjoined, and lay in the way of their moral improvement. This was the state of things at the time mentioned; but afterwards, every new year having added thousands of converts to the christian faith, christian principles began to have great weight in the state, and then both of these horrible spectacles began to decline. Here then was another triumph of Christianity over the wicked institutions of the world.

But we are now to have the pleasure of witnessing other, and these most important effects of the preaching of the Apostles and their successors. The two customs just mentioned were wholly of a civil nature. They had not been kept up for any religious purpose whatever; but the tide, which was now likely to sweep them away, began in process of time to acquire so much additional strength from new tributary streams constantly pouring into it from all parts, as to threaten to wash away the foundations, as well as all that then remained of Idolatry itself. And first the augural College at Rome began to totter. The Augurs and Soothsayers there, and every where else where the gospel was preached, began to fall into discredit. No christian convert could believe, that God had given to these, or to any other men, the power of prognosticating future events, either by the inspection of the entrails of animals slaughtered for the purpose, or by the flight of birds; but that the exercise of their art was an impious presumption that they had more than human knowledge, and a profanation of their intellectual powers. At this time, another effect became apparent. The temples of the Gods began to be visibly deserted; for no christian would set his foot within them.

and a great portion of the Roman people were then Christians; among whom, were even persons who filled offices in the state. At length it pleased God to convert the heart of Constantine himself, who after the death of Maxentius was sole Emperor. From this moment, a new Era began. *Christianity was proclaimed the religion of the State.* Thus fell idolatry, which had enchained the minds of men for more than two thousand years and had been productive during all this time of the most degrading, brutal, and barbarous practices. It fell not by violence or by the sword, but by the mild and persuasive eloquence of the ministers of the new kingdom. After this, new and great results followed at different intervals of time. The temple-worship was abolished by law, and the revenues belonging to it were appropriated to other and better purposes. The Priests with their numerous attendants were dismissed. The images of the Gods were either broken or removed. The college of Augurs also was broken up and its revenues and priesthood dealt with in the like manner. The heathen magistrates also were put aside and replaced by Christians; and among the vicious customs which received their death blow, were at length those bloody games



of which we have just spoken, which had so long disgraced the Romans as a civilized people.

We come now to the solution of the question, whether Jesus Christ did or did not answer the character which the different prophecies had given of some great personage who was to appear upon earth much about the time when he himself came into the world. We have already seen what those prophecies were. We have also examined their contents, and we have brought the meaning of all of them within such a narrow compass, that it may be expressed in the following words, "that he was to establish a new kingdom upon earth, the administration of which should have a constant tendency to put an end to sin and to produce *everlasting righteousness*." Now was this the case? We have only to know two things to be enabled to return an answer; first, what the moral state of the world was when Jesus Christ came into it, and secondly, what it was afterwards. When he came into the world all men living, except a handful of Jews, were Idolaters. St. Paul speaks of them at this time in the following words. "They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate,

deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents; without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." (Romans c. I. v. 29. 30. 31.) This was a general picture of the lives of the heathens, with a few exceptions at the time mentioned. It was drawn by one, who had had great opportunities of knowing their character. Paul, though a Jew by parentage, was yet bred up among the heathens of Cilicia. From this time to his Apostleship, he could not have helped knowing the character of others of the same description; but after he had become an Apostle, whose duty it was in a more especial manner to preach to the heathens, he had still greater opportunities of becoming acquainted with them. Could he have been at Rome, Athens, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Colosse, Ephesus and the country round about it, and not have known how the heathens were living in all the different ranks or gradations of society?

Such then was the moral state of the heathens, when the Apostles of Jesus Christ carried his gospel to them; but what was it afterwards? what was it after they had received the Apostle's

doctrine and fellowship? It is not necessary for me to repeat here by way of proof facts that have been already mentioned, I mean those great and important changes in morals, which I have been careful in specifying as having taken place from the first preaching of the gospel to the time of Constantine the Great. Suffice it therefore to say, that in the course of between three and four centuries idolatry was extirpated, more or less, in the different countries of the then known world; that wicked institutions of a public nature were abolished; and that many millions of individuals were brought to forsake sin and to walk in the paths of righteousness. We are compelled to acknowledge after all these statements that no other person than Jesus Christ, of all the persons who have ever been upon our earth, answered the prophecies in question.

THE END

## ERRATA.

### PAGE

- 15 line 7 for *Oukelos* read *Onkelos*.  
23 line 6 for *he* read *we*.  
34 line 18 for *Zophaz* read *Zophar*.  
39 line 16 for *murmer* read *murmur*.  
44 line 14 for *Subaism* read *Sabaism*.  
49 line 3 from the bottom for *Seng* read *Serug*.  
86 line 3 for *give* read *gave*.

### PART II.

- 118 line 4 from the bottom for *on* read *in*.  
168 line 18 for *priest* read *priests*.  
178 line 6 for *begun* read *began*.  
185 lines 5 and 6 from the bottom omit the words *before*  
*Christ*.  
190 line 23 for *conflicts* read *conflict*.









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